NEGATIVITY AND INFORMATION IN CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

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Abstract

In many democracies election campaign advertising is an important form of communication between parties and candidates and voters. There is however an uncomfortable tension between what campaigns should achieve (according to democratic theories) and what they are like in reality. In Taiwan, political scientists have voiced concerns about the excessively negative tone of party and candidate advertising. Descriptive single-election accounts also suggest that campaign ads in Taiwan regularly fail to provide voters with the substantive information they need to make reasoned choices. These observations are cited as reason to conceive campaign advertising as deleterious to Taiwan's new democracy. However, recent work in the US, suggests that negative advertising may in fact be a source of useful information to voters. By extension, the authors of these studies claim that negative ads make an important contribution to democratic political competition. The central objective of the thesis is to explore these claims in the Taiwan context. Are the theoretical arguments used to explain the content of negative advertising in the US supported by empirical evidence in the highly dissimilar Taiwanese context? Do negative ads in Taiwan, in spite of prior scholarly observations to the contrary, make a useful contribution to the information environment available to voters? In addressing these questions, the thesis aims to contribute a non-western case study to general research on campaign advertising. It also aims to provide the Taiwan studies field with a more systematic account of campaign communications than is currently available. To this end, the study analyzes more than 500 TV and newspaper ads from all four Presidential elections held to date.

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Major candidate names

Wade-Giles	*Pinyin*	*Characters*	*Other name*
Lee Teng-hui	Li Denghui	李登輝	
Peng Ming-min	Peng Mingmin	彭明敏	
Chen Shui-bian	Chen Shuibian	陳水扁	
Lien Chan	Lian Zhan	連戰	
Soong Chu-yu	Song Chuyu	宋楚瑜	James Soong
Hsieh Chang-ting	Xie Changting	謝長廷	Frank Hsieh
Lü Hsiu-lien	Lü Xiulian	呂秀蓮	Annette Lu
Ma Ying-jeou	Ma Yingjiu	馬英九	
Hsiao Wan-chang	Xiao Wanchang	蕭萬長	Vincent Siew
Su Tseng-chang	Su Zhenchang	蘇貞昌	

Names in the text are rendered according to conventional use in the Taiwan studies literature (e.g. Lee Teng-hui etc.). Where no such convention exists, Chinese names are rendered in pinyin.

Political parties

English name	*Acronym*	*Pinyin*	*Characters*
Kuomintang	KMT	Guomindang	中國國民黨
Democratic Progressive Party	DPP	Minjindang	民主進步黨
People First Party	PFP	Qinmindang	親民黨
Taiwan Solidarity Union	TSU	Taiwan Tuanjie Lianmeng	臺灣團結聯盟
New Party*	NP	Xindang	新黨

* Formerly the Chinese New Party (中華新黨)

1. Introduction

Contemporary election campaigns—party and candidate practices and the media that cover them—generally receive a bad press from political scientists. As Lipsitz and colleagues put it, 'there is a fairly ironclad conventional wisdom that campaigns are Hobbesian in two ways (nasty, brutish) but unfortunately not in a third (short)' (Lipsitz et al. 2005: 338). Political actors are devoting more time, money and personnel than ever to their campaign activities, particularly advertising. But it seems they have forgotten that their campaign communications should provide voters with the substantive information they need to make informed choices—at least that is the 'overwhelmingly predominant view among political scientists' (Scammell and Langer 2006: 763). Instead, candidates often appear to be in competition to produce the softest-focus (yet substance-free) image ads, or to see who can throw the most mud.

Consider depictions of campaign season in Taiwan—full to the brim with 'chicanery, political mischief making and personal insults' (Chu 2005). Think how Taiwanese candidates 'have been accused, often by anonymous sources, of heinous crimes, ranging from rape and association with gangsters to belonging to the Communist Party and betraying Taiwan' (Rawnsley 2005: 145). Is it plausible that former President Chen Shui-bian, a lifelong advocate of democracy who entered politics as a lawyer defending democracy activists in the Martial Law era, was really a racist and a dictator? (Charges made against him in two separate campaigns: Rawnsley 2000b; Schafferer 2004). Chen may have had other faults—he *has* since been convicted on corruption charges—but a racist dictator akin to 'all things evil—from Hitler through Osama Bin Laden to Saddam Hussein' (Mattlin 2004a: 19)?

Unlikely as those charges were, every campaign seems to throw up claims that appear, at best, only distantly related to reality. Indeed it can appear that, in the heat of battle, candidates occasionally enter some kind of campaign twilight zone. In this alternative reality it is apparently acceptable to accuse opponents of gambling and womanizing based on nothing more than said opponent—the unfortunate Chen again—spending a weekend in Macau and, believe it or not, the reminder (one imagines sniggeringly, *sotto voce*) that his wife is disabled (Rawnsley 1997).[1]

There is clearly an uncomfortable tension between what election campaigns are like in reality and what they ought to be. Elections are one of the primary mechanisms through which democracy works. Representatives are chosen on the basis of what they propose to do in office and those already in power are held accountable for their performance, through elections. During the campaign, the range of choices, and the pros and cons of each, are laid out for citizens to choose from. Campaigns are the means by which the public is informed and mobilized to make reasoned choices that reflect their best interests. These are the duties implicitly assigned to citizens in democracies and campaigns should assist people in fulfilling them—by providing sufficient, relevant information. In many democracies, campaigns for the high level office are unavoidable (even to the most apathetic) and often dramatic events in the political landscape. Even if campaigns do not have the same capacity to change people's minds as candidates wish they would (Gelman and King 1993), recent empirical research 'convincingly demonstrates that campaigns do indeed matter' (Sulkin and Swigger, 2008; 232). At base, campaigns matter because they are 'democratic institutions link[ing] politicians and voters' (Geer 2006: 20).

[1] Claims made during the campaign for Mayor of Taipei in 1994. Making this ugly hearsay even uglier is that Chen's accusers were formerly part of the KMT regime many believe to have been behind the deliberate hit-and-run that injured Chen's wife in the first place (Roy 2003: 228).

Indeed, campaigns are democratic institutions that constitute 'a main point—perhaps *the* main point—of contact between officials and the populace over matters of public policy' (Riker 1996: 2).

Naturally, the disconnect between the normative and the actual has not escaped the attention of political scientists. This is particularly so in the US, where televised campaign advertising has long been the pre-eminent form of communication between candidates and voters. For many years, the research literature has been dominated by a focus on campaigns in the US (Lau et al. 2007). In many ways this is not surprising, since, according to the subtitle of an article that appeared in *The Washington Post,* 'negative campaign ads are as American as Don Rickles' (Taylor 1985). But it is no longer the case that the study of negative ads can be restricted to campaigns in the US (Sigelman and Shiraev 2002). In Taiwan, negative advertising has become a major campaign tool. In the past two decades democratization has brought major structural changes to political competition. The extension of 'free and fair' elections to political offices at every level and liberalization of the media, have facilitated the rapid expansion of campaign activities. Adapting to these conditions, Taiwanese parties and their candidates have invested increasingly large sums of money in the production and dissemination of campaign advertising—much of it apparently negative. If negative ads are as American as Don Rickles, they are also as Taiwanese as Changhua *ba-wan* (彰化肉圓) or Hsinchu pork balls (新竹貢丸). If Copper is right, that 'Taiwan's style of

democracy was copied from America's' (2003: 145), this should not come as a great surprise.[2]

Given this state of affairs, it is understandable that scholarly research on negative advertising in Taiwan reflects the foreboding tenor of its counterpart in the US—or, more accurately, the earlier body of work in the US known collectively as the 'malaise thesis' (famously, Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). Just as their counterparts in the US worried about the effects of negative advertising on the American public, Taiwan specialists have voiced concerns about the implications of negative advertising for Taiwan's democracy (Chu 2005; Schafferer 2006: see chapter 4 for discussion). Although the thesis does not examine voter effects, two observations suggest that we need to examine the basis for these concerns more closely. First, research on campaign advertising in Taiwan is mainly limited to descriptive single election studies and no study has sought to systematically analyze a large number of ads over time.[3] Our understanding of the contours of negative advertising in Taiwan is currently limited by both a lack of theory and data. The thesis aims to fill this gap by providing a theoretically informed empirical basis for interpreting campaign advertising in Taiwan. To this end, it analyzes more than 500 newspaper and TV ads across all four presidential elections held to date. Second, since its heyday in the mid-1990s, the malaise thesis has declined in scholarly popularity—in the face of strong theoretical and empirical counter-arguments to the effect that negative ads may actually mobilize voters. This finding has prompted a re-think about the role of negative advertising. Indeed, a growing number of political

[2] I refrain from debating Copper's claim here, but in the next chapter I will argue that the campaign environments in Taiwan and the US share many features in common, although in many ways they remain highly dissimilar cases.

[3] The obvious exception is Fell (2005a)—but Fell's study was on issue salience and issue ownership and campaign advertising was used as source of data rather than the focus of the research.

scientists in the US argue that negative advertising makes a useful contribution to the information environment and, by extension, democracy (these developments are surveyed in detail in chapter 2). In short, theoretical arguments and empirical evidence suggest that negative ads are comparatively rich in the specific, substantive and factual information that voters require to make their choices (Geer 2006).

Campaigns are important democratic institutions in consolidated democracies like the US. They may even more important in consolidating democracies such as Taiwan, where information about parties and preferences has been shown to have an effect on the strengthening of institutions and the perceived legitimacy of democracy (Carey and Reynolds 2007). It matters what messages parties and their candidates are transmitting to voters and the ways in which they do so. It is for these reasons that the focus on campaign advertising in this thesis is an important undertaking. Among the central research questions addressed are, how negative is campaign advertising in Taiwan? Are parties and candidates sacrificing important information about their policy plans and preferences for an emphasis on image? To what extent do parties in Taiwan emphasize ideology? Which particular issues and ideological themes do parties emphasize? By exploring these issues, the thesis aims to fill an important deficit in the Taiwan studies literature by providing a more thorough analysis of campaign communications than is currently available.

In addition to addressing these research questions, a further objective of the thesis is to explore the idea that negative advertising, though commonly derided as damaging to Taiwan's democracy, may be a useful, even crucial, part of democratic campaign communications. Here the aim is to contribute to political science research on campaigning by testing purportedly 'general theories' in a non-US case. Are the

theoretical arguments used to explain the content of negative advertising in the US supported by empirical evidence in the highly dissimilar Taiwanese context? Do negative ads in Taiwan make a useful contribution to the information environment available to voters as scholars argue is the case in the US? In order to explore these questions I test three hypotheses derived from existing theoretical work, i.e. that negative ads are more issue-focused, provide more evidence and more information about policy performance than positive ads. By testing these hypotheses with empirical data from Taiwan, the thesis aims to contribute a non-western case study to general research on campaign advertising.

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 2 develops the rationale for choosing Taiwan as a case study. I argue that research on campaign advertising has been dominated by a focus on the US, but this is no longer justified for two reasons. First, the majority of theories about campaign advertising have been developed on basis of phenomena observed in the US. Yet without testing predictions derived from these theories in other contexts, we have no indication of the extent to which they are generalizable beyond the US. Choosing Taiwan as a case study for testing effectively 'American theories,' gives us leverage over the question of generalizability. Second, democratization processes around the world have lead to an increase in the number of contexts where elections, and campaigns, take place. In many of the newer democracies around the world, campaign advertising has become an increasingly common mode of campaign communication (Holtz-Bacha and Kaid 2006). Choosing one of these new democracies expands the range of cases for making new empirical observations and potentially contributing to theory development. Chapter 2 also provides a review of the political communication literature—dominated as it is by

research on the US—charting the developments that have lead to a reconsideration of the role of negative advertising.

The focus of this rethink about negative advertising is essentially based on the perceived importance of information. In chapter 3 I explain and justify the focus on information by looking more closely at the place of the campaign in democratic theories. Having established why information is important I turn to theories of voting behaviour to identify what kind of information voters potentially benefit from. The chapter subsequently reviews existing attempts to measure the informational content of campaign ads and discusses theoretical explanations for the higher information content observed in negative ads.

Chapter 4 introduces my case study, Taiwan. In this chapter I discuss how democratization and liberalization of the media have had an effect on the campaign environment in Taiwan. Distinguishing between earlier and later phases of the democratization process, I describe how campaign practices have changed over time. I argue that campaigning practices have modernized and become more oriented to mass-communication via the media. Although the 'ground game' remains important in Taiwan, especially in lower level elections, presidential campaigns are increasingly geared to the 'air wars' characteristic of national campaigns in the US. I will argue that the campaign environment in Taiwan looks increasingly like the 'post-modern campaigns' (Norris 2000) of the US. The increasing prevalence of campaign advertising is one manifestation.

Chapter 5 specifies a series of hypotheses and research questions to be addressed empirically. Three major hypotheses are derived from existing work in the US to be tested in Taiwan. Additionally I develop several exploratory research

questions on issues of interest to Taiwan specialists that I argue have yet to be satisfactorily addressed or require updating. I then discuss the concept of negativity and specify very clearly what I mean by negative advertising in this study. The remainder of the chapter describes the data collection and the methods used to generate appropriate empirical information.

Chapter 6 presents findings for the research questions about advertising in Taiwan. Several results run contrary to previous expert accounts. For instance, campaign advertising in Taiwan does not appear to be progressively or excessively negative (the proportion of negative claims is about the same as in the US). Rather than obsessing about image, Taiwanese candidates focus on the issues and are increasingly eschewing ideological claims for policy. Differences in candidate behaviour across campaigns appear to vary according to contextual and strategic factors which I discuss in the chapter.

In chapter 7 three main hypotheses are tested with data from Taiwan. The findings are generally supportive—negative claims are more likely (than positive claims) to be supported with evidence, to focus on policy and to provide information about policy performance. By the standards developed in chapter 3, negative ads in Taiwan provide a potentially useful informational resource for voters. This finding is a very distinct from other research on Taiwan. Equally, the findings suggest that theoretical arguments developed in the context of campaigning in the US are capable of explaining the content of advertising in a highly dissimilar democracy. However, the story does not end here. The empirical findings for Taiwan presented in this chapter show substantial variation according to a range of contextual and agent-based variables. Differences across elections, candidate status (e.g. incumbents and

challengers) and other variables suggest that the connection between negativity and information is more complex and more contingent than currently conceived. These issues are taken up in the concluding chapter, where I discuss the implications of this study for theorizing about campaign advertising and researching campaigning in Taiwan.

2. Campaign advertising in the US—and elsewhere

The majority of empirical research on campaign advertising, particularly negative advertising, has been done in the context of American election campaigns. Consider Lau and colleagues' recent meta-analysis of research on negative advertising and voter level exposure effects (Lau et al. 2007). In a *global survey* of the research literature, which unearthed in excess of one hundred published and unpublished papers, just three focused on non-US contexts.[4] This finding is symptomatic of the fact that the majority of theories of campaigning have been advanced as a means to explaining phenomena observed in the US. The study of campaign advertising in non-western democracies is extremely limited compared research on the US and in comparison with the volume of comparative research on other aspects of the media (Gurevitch and Blumler 2004). And while Gurevitch and Blumler note that there is 'widespread appreciation' of the contribution made by comparative media research (2004: 326), it is difficult to say the same for research on election campaigning or negative advertising.

Yet, negative advertising now seems to be a global phenomenon and can no longer be parochially conceived as a peculiarity of American election campaigns. As Sigelman and Shiraev observe, 'with competitive elections being held in nations where they were once unimaginable, going negative is now a worldwide phenomenon' (2002: 45). Empirical research testifies to the emergence of negative advertising as an increasingly prevalent mode of campaign communication in diverse electoral contexts from Russia to Mexico, Mali to Brazil and, of course, Taiwan (see for example the edited collection by Kaid and Holz-Bacha 2006). Rather than

[4] Specifically there were two studies on the UK (Dermody and Scullion 2000; Sanders and Norris 2002) and one on the 1998 Taipei mayoral campaign (Chang 2003).

implying the 'Americanization' of campaigning as, for example, Lee et al. (1998) suggest, this trend reflects the belief, manifest in candidates and their consultants, that going negative is often strategically expedient (Damore 2002; Skaperdas and Grofman 1995; Theilmann and Wilhite 1998). Research on non-western contexts frequently finds both similarities and differences with American campaigning. Researchers have generally rejected the Americanization thesis and the implied wholesale import of campaign communication practices from the US into other democracies (for critiques of the Americanization thesis see Negrine and Papathanasopoulos 1996; Plasser 2000). Finding more support are theories of modernization and professionalization (Voltmer 2005) that explain how parties and candidates have adapted to the evolution of more sophisticated media and more liberal political environments—by employing specialist consultants and modifying their campaign strategies. The 'shopping model' whereby candidates selectively incorporate campaign strategies and routines from professionals in advanced democracies and adapt them to local conditions is similarly persuasive (Plasser and Plasser 2002; Rawsnley 2003a). A feature of empirical research globally is that almost everywhere there are competitive elections negative advertising appears to be a feature of the campaign. And if candidates continue to perceive real or imagined advantages in going negative, it is likely to persist. Currently however, whether the extent, content, forms and effects of negative advertising in other contexts are similar or different to those extensively examined in the US, is a question that awaits further investigation. To this end, this thesis contributes a case study of campaign advertising in a newer democracy in East Asia: Taiwan.

One of the major motivations for the thesis is the need to test the extent to which essentially 'American theories' can explain the campaign behaviour of parties and candidates in a non-US context. In particular, the choices candidates make about the tone and content of their campaign advertising. The selection of Taiwan as a case study provides a strong test for judging the extent to which theories developed in the US are able to 'travel,' i.e. the generalizability of theoretical predictions. Equally, case studies on non-western, newer democracies are a potentially fertile ground for theory development. The peculiarities of campaigning in such cases have the potential to enrich the corpus of empirical and theoretical insights— a major component in the call to 'de-westernize' communication research generally (e.g. Curran and Park 2000). Work on various non-western cases is starting to make valuable theoretical and empirical contributions to political communication research (e.g. Mickiewicz and Richter 1996; Porto 2006; Reis 1998; Samuels 2002; Tak et al. 1997; Taveesin and Brown 2006; Willnat and Aw 2006; Wittman and Thiam 2006).

Choosing Taiwan as a case study gives leverage over the question of the whether theories designed to explain phenomena in the US are equally applicable to other democracies; in this case a newer democracy in East Asia. The US and Taiwan both have democratic political systems. Both hold regular 'free and fair' elections and share a similarly sophisticated mixed ownership media environment. In both cases, presidential elections are held every four years and generate high levels of interest and attention. In this sense, elections are conducted in 'campaign environments' (Norris 2000) that share several features in common. Yet, Taiwan is dissimilar to the US in many important ways. In terms of size, culture, length of experience with democracy, national security and the solidity of national identity,

Taiwan and the US qualify as 'most different' cases (Przeworski and Teune 1970). The significant differences between these two cases make it possible to make inferences about the generalizability of theoretical predictions (George and Bennett 2005). In the US, political scientists have argued that negative advertising is associated with higher levels of certain types of information which potentially benefit democratic competition (most prominently, Geer 2006). Currently we do not know whether this holds for negative advertising in other contexts or is simply a unique feature of negative advertising in the US. If a similar connection between negativity and information is observed in Taiwan, in spite of its dissimilarities with the US, then it is reasonable to infer that higher levels of certain types of information may be a common feature of negative advertising across even highly dissimilar democracies. On the other hand, if this connection is not observed in Taiwan, we can infer that the connection between negative advertising and information is not generalizable to every democratic context. And we can then look to the differences between the two cases for reasons why this is so.

These are the major tasks of the thesis. The first necessary step however, is to examine the research literature on campaigning. As I have noted above, this literature has been dominated by research on the US, several strands of which are drawn together in this chapter. I first provide a broad overview of the literature before charting the development of the campaign environment in the US. I discuss how these developments have had a strong effect on the campaign advertising research agenda and the emergence of a focus on the informational content of negative advertising that is the subject of this thesis.

2.1 Negative advertising: 'An American phenomenon'

As Riker's (1996) account of the debate to ratify the US Constitution demonstrates, negative campaigning has been a feature of American politics for a long time. Add to this the pre-eminence of television in US campaigns since the 1960s (Prior 2007) and it is not surprising that negative television advertising has long been conceived as a peculiarly American phenomenon. In one commentator's words, negative advertising is 'as American as Mississippi mud' (Goodman (1996) cited in Sigelman and Shiraev 2002: 45). This opinion is reflected in a research literature that has been dominated by a focus on campaigns in the US. Researchers have primarily targeted presidential campaigns (Benoit 1999; Devlin 1986; Dover 2006; Geer 2006; Jamieson 1992; Kahn and Kenney 2004; Nelson and Boynton 1997; West 2001), but also House and Senate races (Hale et al. 1996; Jackson and Carsey 2007; Jackson and Sides 2006; Kahn and Kenney 1999, 2004; Lau and Pomper 2001, 2004; Sellers 1998) and party primaries (Djupe and Peterson 2002; Hanson and Benoit 2001). To a lesser extent, gubernatorial and mayoral races (Krebs and Holian 2007; Mulder 1979) have received attention. Much of this research is explicitly motivated by concerns about the health of American democracy (Garramone et al. 1990; Holbert et al. 2002; Jamieson 1992; Joslyn 1986; Franz et al. 2008), reflecting the salience of scholarly and popular debates on the state of democracy at the systemic, elite and mass levels in the US. Thematically, research on campaign advertising in the US can be divided into several major strands. I will summarize of each of these strands and indicate exemplary work from each.

The first of these strands of research focuses on the tone and content of campaign advertising. Researchers have produced typologies of campaign ads,

analysed 'issue' versus 'image advertising,' debated conceptualizations of negative advertising, conceptualized and measured visual content, audio content, the use of symbols and other presentation and production techniques. While the majority of this research employs some kind of content analysis (Neuendorf 2002), a number of alternative approaches and methods can be found, including 'videostyle', 'functional theory', discourse analysis, thematic analysis, semantic analysis and semiotic analysis. Several approaches, mainly in the sub-field of political psychology, address voter learning, cognitive processing and psychological processes.

Table 2.1: Research on the tone and content of campaign advertising

Issue versus image advertising:	➢ Bowers 1972; Cundy 1986; Dover 2006; Homer and Batra 1994; Johnston and Kaid 2002; Johnston 1989; O'Keefe and Sheinkopf 1974; Pfau et al. 2000; Rudd 1986.
Conceptualizations of negative advertising:	➢ Devlin 2001; James and Hensel 1991; Jamieson et al. 2000; Proctor and Schenk-Hamlin 1996; Richardson 2001.
Visual/Audio content:	➢ Geiger and Reeves 1991; Nelson and Boynton 1997; Nelson and Nelson 2006; Noggle and Kaid 2000; Rabinowitz 2000; Thorson et al. 1991.
Verbal styles and use of symbols:	➢ Ballotti and Kaid 2000; Kosterman 1992; Pfau et al. 1995; Sherr 1999.
Presentation and production techniques:	➢ Donohue 1973; Coleman and Wasike 2004; Johnston and Kaid 2002; Kaid and Johnston 2000; Kaid and Sanders 1978; Kepplinger 1991; Nesbit 1988; Rabinowitz 2000.
Functional theory. Discourse/Thematic/ Semantic/Semiotic analysis.	➢ Benoit 1999; Biocca 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Descutner et al. 1991; Palmer 2002. Scheckels 2002; Wen et al. 2004
Voter learning: Emotion, Cognitive processing, Psychological processes:	➢ Brader 2005; Bradley et al. 2007; Budesheim et al. 1996; Chang 2001; Craig et al. 2005; Englis 1994; Garramone 1986; Garramone et al. 1991; Hughes 1994; Lang 1991; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Meirick 2002. Perloff 1991. Zaller 1992.

A second, major strand of the literature focuses on voter level exposure effects. A fundamental question is whether campaigns have minimal or greater effects. Although research in the 'minimal effects' tradition argues that voting behaviour is almost entirely conditioned by partisan predispositions (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964), more recent work shows that campaigns have various effects on voters, 'even if they do not often have direct persuasive effects' on vote choice (Sulkin and Swigger 2008: 232). Research on specific exposure effects includes potential effects on levels of voter turnout (for meta-analyses of the research findings of this vast literature see Lau et al. 1999, 2007), levels of political knowledge and voter perceptions of the candidates and the effect of political advertising on electoral outcomes. A well-established sub-field focuses on the influence of candidate gender in creating campaign ads, the use of 'gendered cues' and differential gender effects at the voter level. A similar branch of research deals with the role and effects of race at the candidate and voter levels. Examples of this strand of research are shown in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Research on the effects of campaign advertising

Minimal effects	➢ Berelson et al. 1954; Converse 1964; Gelman and King 1993.
Greater effects	➢ Allen and Burrell 2002; Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002; Finkel 1993; Geer and Lau 2006; Goldstein and Ridout 2004; Iyengar and Simon 2000; Sulkin and Swigger 2008.
Effects on voter turnout	➢ Ansolabehere et al. 1994; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Ashworth and Clinton 2006; Finkel and Geer 1998; Freedman and Goldstein 1999; Goldstein and Freedman 2002; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Lau and Pomper 2001.
Effects on political knowledge	➢ Chaffee et al. 1994; Joslyn 1990; Kahn and Kenney 2000; Krugman 1965; Meirick 2005; Valentino et al. 2004.
Perceptions of the candidates and electoral outcomes	➢ Basil et al. 1991; Benoit 2004; Chang 2001; Fochs 1980; Franz and Ridout 2007; Jacobson 1975; Joslyn 1981; King and McConnell 2003; Pinkleton 2002.
Gender effects	➢ Benze and Declerq 1985; Bystrom and Kaid 2002; Carlson 2001; Chang and Hitchon 2004; Dinzes et al. 1994; Gordon et al. 2003; Hitchon and Chang 1995; Hitchon et al. 1997; Kahn 1993; Kaid et al. 1984; King and McConnell 2003; Robertson et al. 1999; Sherr 1999.
Race effects	➢ Connaughton and Jarvis 2004; Krebs and Holian 2007; Mendelberg 2001; Morris et al. 1999; Valentino et al. 2002.

A third strand of the literature focuses on candidate strategy; from a political marketing perspective; employing informal or formal models of campaigning and a diverse range of theories on the determinants and influences of campaign attacks. Candidates' advertising strategies, increasingly drawn up by professional campaign consultants, are often conceived as a rational or adaptive response to the evolution of the media environment (Swanson and Mancini 1996). Work on campaign advertising is thus closely aligned to another strand of research which focuses on the role of the media.

Table 2.3: Research on candidate strategy

Political marketing	➢ Jamieson 1996; Jamieson and Waldman 2001; Kavanagh 1995; Mark 2006; Newman 1999; Norris et al. 1999; Roddy and Garramone 1988; Scammell 1999.
Informal models	➢ Granato and Wong 2004; Pfau and Kenski 1990; Sigelman and Buell 2003; Simon 2002.
Formal models	➢ Davis and Farrantino 1996; Doron and On 1983; Harrington and Hess 1996; Riker 1996; Simon 2002; Skaperdas and Grofman 1995.
Determinants of campaign attacks	➢ Carsey et al. 2006; Damore 2002; Haynes and Rhine 1988; Peterson and Djupe 2005; Petrocik 1996; Petrocik et al. 2004; Skaperdas and Grofman 1995; Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy 1995.

Research on the media has focused on the evolution of the media environment discussed in detail below, but also on interactive media effects such as reinforcing or undermining messages in candidate ads, evaluations of media coverage and media reactions to candidate advertising, the effectiveness and voter-level effects of 'ad-watches' and agenda-setting effects. Researchers have also studied campaign advertising aired or published in various media types. Given the TV-centric media environment prevailing in US campaigns, there is a dominant focus of research on TV spots, but there also studies on newspaper ads, radio ads and, increasingly, Internet campaigning. Several studies provide comparisons of campaign advertising and its effects across different media, particularly highlighting the differences between broadcasting and narrow-casting (Cohen 1976; Kaid 2002, 2003).

Table 2.4: Research on media and ads in different media

Interactive media effects	➢ Atkeson and Partin 2001; Bartels 1993; Gwiasda 2001; Jasperson and Fan 2004; McClure and Patterson 1974; Patterson and McClure 1973.
Media reactions to candidate advertising and ad-watches	➢ Bennett 1997; Cappela and Jamieson 1994; Haynes et al. 2006; Just et al. 1999. McKinnon and Kaid 1999; Min 2002; O'Sullivan and Geiger 1995; Tedesco et al. 1996; Tedesco et al. 2000
Agenda-setting	➢ Abbe et al. 2003; Ghorpade 1986; Golan et al. 2007; Hansen and Benoit 2002; McCombs et al. 1997; Riker 1993; Roberts and McCombs 1994.
Research on TV spots	➢ Aden 1989; Benoit 1999; Devlin 1986; Franz et al. 2008; Geer 2006; West 2001.
Newspaper ads	➢ Bowers 1972; Humke et al. 1975; Luttbeg 1988; Mullen 1963, 1968.
Radio ads	➢ Geer and Geer 2003; Overby and Barth 2006; Schwartz 1987; Shapiro and Rieger 1992.
Internet campaigning	➢ D'Alessio 1997, 2000; Farnsworth and Owen 2004; Foot and Schneider 2006; Gibson and Ward 2002; Gibson et al. 2003; Gibson et al. 2004; Hindman 2005; Kaid 2003; Ward and Gibson 2001.

A fifth strand of the research literature focuses on the regulatory environment, particularly legislative reforms seeking to 'stem the sleaze' (Frankel 1993: 365). Research in this vein has looked at regulation of campaign advertising in terms of the Constitution (Scott 2003), free speech (Caywood and Preston 1989), the ethics of campaign advertising (Caywood and Laczniak 1985; Kaid 1991) and in particular, from a public policy perspective, evaluating the effectiveness of legislation or promoting potential reforms (Bartels 2000; Buchanan 2001; Clinger 1987; Frankel 1993; Franz et al. 2006; Kaid and Jones 2004; Krasno and Goldstein 2002; Taylor 1997), including the issue of campaign financing and spending (Sinclair 1995; Wertheimer 1997).

Much of the literature surveyed here, in addition to popular discourse, has a decidedly pessimistic tenor. It often frames American democracy in crisis terms where central elements of the democratic process are perceived as failing. Typical narratives describe how the mass media, following the dictates of commercialism, have dumbed down their political coverage and have become obsessed with strategy, human interest storylines and the 'horse race' features of the campaign (Jamieson and Cappela 1997; Patterson 1993). Campaigns are often criticized for being excessively long and divisive, with candidates trying to out-spend each other to see who can sling the most mud (Jamieson 1992). Citizens too, are censured for being too uninterested and apolitical to prepare themselves for choosing a representative (Campbell et al. 1960; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996); a task that half of the American electorate regularly fails to do. Franz et al. label this disjuncture between democratic ideals and campaign reality a 'disquieting gulf [that] political science has long wrestled with' (2008: 12).

The pessimistic tenor of this debate notwithstanding, the tide has now seemingly turned for negative advertising. Though every campaign throws up egregious examples of scurrilous and irrelevant attacks with little regard for 'fair-play' or 'the facts,' broader research findings suggest that negative advertising makes a useful, even crucial, contribution to the information environment available to voters (Freedman et al. 2004; Geer 2006; Jamieson et al. 2000; Mayer 1996; Polborn and Yi 2006). Long characterized as representing the worst excesses of the contemporary campaign, recent empirical findings and associated theoretical work attest to a strong connection between the tone of an ad and the level of information it contains. Simply put, negative ads appear to provide more abundant and relevant

information for voters to base their choices on, at least in the case of presidential TV spots (Geer 2006; Franz et al. 2008).

The following sections examine the 'disquieting gulf' in more detail. They also discuss how political communication research has evolved to the point where negative advertising is seen as potentially reducing, rather than expanding, the 'disquieting gulf.' I first examine the place of the campaign in democratic theories, the starting point of the majority of research on advertising. Arguing that to understand campaign advertising we must first look at broader campaign contexts, I discuss the evolution of the media and political environments and candidate responses to prevailing conditions. I then review the dominant research agenda of the past 15 years, i.e. the malaise/ mobilization debate on the effects of exposure to negative advertising. Charting these developments I show how the finding that negative advertising raises levels of participation and interest amongst voters exposed to it has emerged.

2.2 The role of the campaign

A democratic election campaign is as 'an organized communication effort involving the role of one or more agencies seeking to influence the outcome of processes of political decision making by shaping public opinion' (Farrell and Beck 2002: 3). Campaign advertising is one of numerous communication tools (alongside stump speeches, debates, campaign rallies, direct mailing etc.), used by parties and candidates standing for electoral office. In some electoral contexts, other actors such as support groups and interest groups also use campaign advertising to inform and influence voters. A key concern motivating criticism of contemporary campaigning is that party and candidate resources are disproportionately assigned to trying to

persuade voters to vote for them— to the detriment of providing the information that voters require to compare the candidates and make 'reasoned' choices.

A major strand of research on political advertising grounds campaigns in democratic theory through the notion that in a representative democracy 'citizens ought to participate in the process of choosing leaders and expressing opinions on matters of policy' (Freedman et al. 2004: 723). In this view, two important features of democratic systems, the choice of a representative to act in one's own best interests and the ability to hold office-holders accountable for their actions, function through the two-way communication inherent in elections and associated campaigns.[5] Voters express, in this view, their preferences by choosing candidates that best represent their interests and by rewarding or sanctioning office holders on the basis of their performance on the job.

In this view, election campaigns are 'an institutionalized forum that bridge civil society and the government' (Simon 2002: 11), providing a channel of communication between governors and governed. Campaigns give candidates the opportunity to delineate policy plans, defend records of governance and offer policy alternatives. Candidates are required to communicate their policy positions and credentials, so that voters are *potentially* able to choose the candidate or party that is closest to their policy preferences (e.g. Downs 1957). Incumbents and challengers are required to justify or challenge records of governance, so that office-holders can *potentially* be held accountable for their records (e.g. Schattschneider 1960).[6] In

[5] Of course, this is not to imply that democracy is solely about elections. In the absence of equality, justice, tolerance of difference, rule of law, institutional accountability etc, free and fair elections alone cannot be considered to constitute democracy in the wider sense (Franz et al. 2008).

[6] I use the word 'potentially' because the extent to which voters actually behave in this way is another question. The important thing to note here is that if this information is *not* available, then voters do not even have the chance to base their choices on it.

short, 'in an ideal representative democracy plentiful and reliable political information should be readily available to allow citizens to make informed political decisions' (Gunther and Mugham 2000: 421). The significance of the campaign as an informational and mobilizational mechanism is encapsulated in the statement that 'self government is a nonsense unless the self which governs is able and determined to make its will effective' (Meikeljohn 1983: 276). And while American voters have long been criticized for their relative lack of knowledge and engagement in the democratic process (Campbell et al. 1960; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997), actors on the 'supply side,' i.e. politicians, parties and the media, have been censured in similar fashion for failing to fulfil their responsibilities to citizens. Scholarly and popular criticism has only intensified as the campaign environment has evolved.

2.3 The post-modern campaign

Norris (2000) labels the prevailing campaign environment in the US, i.e. the political and media environments in which campaigns take place, 'post-modern.' The transition from the 'modern campaign environment' between the 1950s and 1980s to the post-modern campaign environment since the late 1980s, has had a fundamental effect on the modes and forms of campaign practices. Farrell and Beck vividly define the contemporary post-modern campaign as 'warfare among elites, fuelled by technology, manned by consultants, rousing supporters by damaging opponents' (2002: 187). Plasser notes the 'fixation on candidate image, strategic product development, target group marketing, news management, spin, permanent campaigning and negative advertising' (2001: 35) characteristic of post-modern campaigns. The rise of the post-modern campaign and the campaign methods it has facilitated (summarized in Table 2.5 below) have prompted criticism and concern

from scholars and popular commentators. A part of this discourse appears quite alarmist and harkens back to a past golden era when candidates allegedly ran respectful and dignified campaigns. Whether campaigns have ever lived up to these lofty epithets is highly questionable. Accounts of campaigning for the US Constitution demonstrate high levels of negativity, misinformation and a level of incivility that would even make the hardened politicians of today blanch (Riker 1996). Longitudinal content-analytical studies of campaign advertising also allow us to reject with confidence the notion of a golden era of clean campaigning (see Geer 2006: 36-38 for a review).

More convincing than the 'golden era lost' narrative is the argument that interpretations of negative advertising have been strongly influenced by trends in the news media (Franz et al. 2008). With high demand for content from the 24 hour news channels and the dominance of 'strategic' and 'conflict' frames (Patterson 1993; see De Vreese and Semetko (2002) for a European example), negative campaigning and negative advertising have themselves become news.[7] This gives the impression that campaigns have become more negative, when in fact it is attention to negative advertising that has increased. For instance, the 1988 presidential campaign in the US between George Bush Sr. and Michael Dukakis was seen by some observers (Jamieson 1988, 1992; Taylor 1989) as a watershed election in terms of candidates' propensity to go negative. Yet Geer's (2006) analysis of twelve presidential campaigns demonstrates that advertising was not significantly more negative in 1988. Instead it was media attention to negative advertising that increased dramatically in that year (Geer 2006: 118-23). The supposed degeneration

[7] On the synergies between negative advertising and news coverage, and the potential for candidates to 'ride the wave,' see Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994).

of advertising standards after 1988 may therefore be an illusion, in part generated by much closer media attention to candidates' negative campaign tactics.

The propagation of this illusion is just one example of how the media environment has affected (in this case, perceptions of) campaign advertising. Indeed, to understand how campaign advertising has evolved it is necessary to go beyond advertising itself to look at the evolution of the entire campaign environment. As Benoit et al. argue, 'one cannot understand presidential campaigns without understanding the mass media in which these campaigns occur' (2007: 31). This holds if only for the fact that the vast majority of voters' only exposure to politicians comes via the media (Prior 2007). There are many ways in which the media environment affects modes of campaigning. For example, the type and number of media outlets available and changes in the way that the news media cover campaigns and generate news. These are in turn affected by prevailing media systems (public, commercial or mixed), questions of ownership and access and the regulatory framework (e.g. the rules pertaining to what and to what extent parties can disseminate their message). At a more fundamental level the nature of electoral competition is affected by institutional arrangements that provide incentives for and constraints on particular kinds of competitive behaviour by parties and candidates (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009). We take for granted for example, that institutional arrangements in most democracies allow some form of campaign advertising, but do not allow physical intimidation or vote buying.

Table 2.5: Major features of presidential campaigns in the US.

The modern campaign:

- Local activism replaced by nationally co-ordinated strategic campaign.
- Party officials/volunteer activists replaced by paid professional consultants.
- Partisan press superseded by national TV news.
- TV campaign leads to spotlight on leadership, image and personalization.
- Move to the 'long campaign', up to one year before polling day.
- Regular commission and publication of opinion polls.
- Weakening of party loyalties and social cleavages leading to voter de-alignment.
- Advent of 'catch-all' strategies, designed to appeal to largest number of voters.

The post-modern campaign:

- Accelerated fragmentation of TV outlets.
- Talk radio, 24 hour news channels, predominance of infotainment.
- Internet leads to further diversification of channels of communication.
- Increased political use of new media.
- Move to the permanent campaign.
- Semi-autonomous and specialized professional consultants.
- Continuous feedback for parties provided by polls and focus groups.
- Rapid increase in campaign spending at every level of office.
- Negative advertising becomes the dominant mode of campaign communication.

Sources: Norris (2000); Patterson (1993); Prior (2007).

2.4 Evolution of the media environment

While campaign advertising in various guises has a long history, the predominance of the '30 second spot,' 'personal attack ads' and other forms of advertising prevalent today, has emerged over time as the media environment has evolved. Structural accounts of the evolution of the media environment in the US typically run as follows (see for instance Graber 2000; Jamieson and Cappella 1997; McQuail 1992; Norris 2000; Patterson 1993; Prior 2007). Technological advances leading to lower production costs, in combination with widespread increases in levels of disposable income, led to the near universal affordability of TV sets by the late 1960s. This development was followed by an exponential increase in cable/satellite penetration and concomitant expansion of commercial channels. Fragmentation of the national TV market exposed broadcasters to intense market competition, with

literally hundreds of channels, including nascent 24 hour news channels, competing for ratings and advertising revenue.

One alleged result of the commercialization of television news has been the 'dumbing down' of political coverage, i.e. disinvestment in issue-oriented 'hard news' and analysis in favour of 'infotainment' and 'soft news' formats with greater mass appeal. Curran claims that 'the market undermines intelligent and rational debate' by forcing broadcasters to present trivialized, personalized and de-contextualized coverage marked by the dominance of action over process and visualization over abstraction (2005: 129). Similarly, Patterson argues that market competition has given rise to a situation where 'the chief goal of the media is not to foster a free marketplace of ideas, but to attract and hold a large audience for advertisers' (1993: 253). Rather than constituting a civic forum encouraging pluralistic debate, public learning and participation in politics (as Norris suggests it should; 2000: 24), scholars find the opposite is the case. Patterson argues that the progressively blurred distinction between news and entertainment diminishes citizens' ability to distinguish 'reality' from 'performance' (Patterson 1993).[8] Gunther and Mugham find that the news media's emphasis on the strategic, conflictual and 'horserace' features of the campaign obliges voters 'to reach conclusions and make choices on the basis of criteria that are unrelated to the real business of government' (2000:7).

A corollary 'cultural' account of media evolution focuses on the repercussions of Vietnam and Watergate. These events allegedly mark the apotheosis of the media as 'watchdog' and precipitated the 'adversarial journalism' (Norris

[8] The blurring of news and entertainment is a similar problem in Taiwan, where politicians have embraced the need for 'performance.' For general discussion of 'political theatre' in Taiwan, see Fell (2005b, 2007). For a specific example (i.e. political talk shows), see Chu (2003).

2000) and 'anti-politics' orientation of the press (Patterson 1993). Post-Watergate news coverage is noted for the increasing dominance of conflictual and strategic frames in which politics in general, not just electoral politics, is interpreted as a game in which politicians vie for power. In this interpretative schema, 'issues are merely tokens in a strategic game' (*Ibid*: 122).[9] Jamieson notes five characteristics of strategy coverage: winning and losing as the central concern; a preponderance of language associated with war, games and competition; politics as stories with performers, critics and an audience; the centrality of image, style and perception of the candidate; and the heavy weighting of opinion polls and candidates' standing in them (Jamieson 1992).[10]

Political scientists have long observed developments in the media environment with concern.[11] These concerns are particularly acute when it comes to potential exposure effects at the voter level. In one early study, Lang and Lang (1966) found that watching TV news led to voter cynicism as a result of over-emphasis on political conflict. This finding was supported by empirical work by Robinson (1976), who coined the term 'video malaise' to describe feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration with the whole political process amongst those exposed to TV coverage of politics. More recently, Nye et al. also found that 'media attention to scandal leads to public belief that politicians are corrupt' (1997: 16). Similarly Jamieson and Cappella's experimental study indicates that 'strategic news is highly related to cynical responses' and activating latent public cynicism (1997: 150). This is a

[9] On the broader effects of media framing, see Iyengar (1991).
[10] For discussion of how the changing role of the media (and party responses) affect campaign agendas, see Semetko et al. 1991.
[11] Consider the foreboding titles of some of the major works on media in the US: *Spiral of Cynicism* (Cappella and Jamieson 1997); *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (Entman 1989); *Breaking the News: How Media Undermine American Democracy* (Fallows 1996); *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Postman 1985); *Feeding Frenzy*: *How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics* (Sabato 1991).

worrying discovery when we consider Patterson's (1993) claim that strategy and conflict are the dominant frames in the US media—in contrast to voters who, Patterson argues, are more concerned with 'problem solving' than 'the game.' Many scholars in the 1990s appeared to share the worry that 'the conflict-driven sound-bite oriented discourse of politicians and conflict-saturated strategy-oriented structure of media coverage' have combined to create a 'mutually reinforcing spiral of cynicism' (Jamieson and Cappella 1997: 9).

More recent empirical research however suggests that news media usage may have a positive effect on knowledge and participation, albeit with the caveat that the benefits are mostly felt amongst those voters who are comparatively engaged to begin with. In an analysis of 29 OECD democracies since 1949, Norris finds that heavy news media use was strongly correlated with knowledge, trust and participation (2000). In a separate analysis on the US, Norris finds that 'news exposure was not associated with civic disengagement' (2002: 141). These empirical findings form the basis of her theory of a 'virtuous circle' in which 'news media and party campaigns serve to further activate the active' (2000: 19; for similar results in the UK see Newton 1999). Markus Prior on the other hand challenges the notion of a benign 'virtuous circle,' arguing that a voluntary self-sorting of the electorate 'threatens to separate the politically interested and engaged from those who favour entertainment and abstain from politics' (2007: 18; see also Aarts and Semetko 2003).

Prior argues that inadvertent exposure to television news during the 'broadcast era' in the US (i.e. the pre-cable era when viewers could only watch what was broadcast on the terrestrial networks) had a powerful effect on turnout and

political moderation. Incorporating Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1996) 'opportunity-motivation-ability' model and Down's (1957) notion of by-product learning, Prior shows how 'different media environments provide different opportunities to learn about politics' (Prior 2007: 29), and by extension, condition individual political behaviour. In the 'low choice' environment of the broadcast TV era, selection of preferred content was inefficient, exposing 'switchers,' (i.e. viewers who favoured entertainment to news, but preferred any genre to turning the TV off) to political information. Lack of alternative options forced switchers to watch the evening news because there was literally nothing else on. Learning from this accidental exposure often made the difference between the less engaged going to the polls or not. Fast forward to the present-day where the 'high choice' media environment allows 'a lot of room for people's interests and skills to guide their media use and political learning' (*Ibid*: 14). Switchers are now free to fulfil their destiny, efficiently accessing entertainment without ever exposing themselves to political information. Equally, the politically interested have access to more information than even the most hardcore news junkie can handle.

The suggestion that inadvertent exposure to political information has receded in the high choice information age, increases the value of campaign ads as 'informational supplements' (Franz et al. 2008). Freedman et al. argue that 'campaign ads represent the multi-vitamins of American politics… attractively (and expertly) packaged, simple to comprehend, easy to digest' (2004: 725). Continuing the metaphor, Freedman et al. (2004) acknowledge that multi-vitamins alone do not constitute a healthy diet.

2.5 Candidate responses

Critics of campaign advertising often point out that campaign advertising, especially in the form of the archetypical '30 second spot,' is superficial, obsessed with image, laissez-faire (or worse) with 'the facts,' exaggerated and misleading. In the case of negative advertising, critics add that it is frequently unfair, untruthful, uncivil and generally unseemly. The extent to which these stereotypes hold is one of the focal points of the subsequent empirical investigation in this thesis. At the outset however, we can say with confidence that modes of campaigning have been influenced by changes in the campaign environment and candidate responses to these changes.

Structural developments in the political and media environments and actual campaigning techniques are generally thought to be linked through the rational adaptive behaviour of parties and candidates (Jamieson 1996; Swanson and Mancini 1996). For example, although the 'ground game' is still important (see for example Obama's successful mobilization campaign for the US Presidency in 2008) it is increasingly unfeasible for candidates in national elections to rely on 'machine politics' and other similarly parochial methods to mobilize supporters.[12] Instead they must use other means to reach and attract support from an increasingly complex society (Swanson and Mancini 1996). In combination with the rise of a sophisticated and increasingly autonomous media, this helps to explain why 'campaigning for office and governing are increasingly tailored to the needs of the mass media' (*Ibid*: 1). In this context however, political news and other messages are predominantly filtered and mediated by journalists and commentators. For candidates, this increases the attraction of campaign advertising as a method of *direct communication* with the

[12] On declining cleavage voting and particularization of choice behaviour, see Franklin (1985), Franklin et al. (1992), Tuckel and Tejera (1983).

electorate on a massive scale. This macro-level account is a plausible explanation for candidates in the US, Taiwan and elsewhere, investing increasingly large sums of money in the production and dissemination of campaign advertising. However it does not sufficiently explain the rise of the twin bêtes noire, image advertising and negativity.

In one view, candidate advertising is all about creating and propagating a candidate's image— to the detriment of focusing on the issues of more importance to voters and the nation. One approach to explaining this alleged preoccupation with image is political marketing. Political marketing analyses are concerned with micro-level campaign strategy, i.e. the strategic and tactical decisions that candidates and their consultants make during the campaign. In a broader sense, these decisions are seen as 'a response to new technology and the importation of the skills of professional communicators' (Kavanagh 1995: 1). The political marketing approach draws on theories of consumer marketing and business management to conceptualize the 'political market.' It then analyzes candidate responses to prevailing market conditions. Applying metaphors from consumer marketing, candidates are seen as purveyors of a product that has to be packaged and promoted to voters, who as political consumers are free to shop around and choose the best product. The candidate-voter relationship is thus conceived as a kind of political exchange, where the voter-consumer invests trust in a candidate-producer to supply goods (i.e. policies). It follows that the explanation for image advertising lies in the conception of a candidate's reputation and personal credibility as the *only thing of substance* that they are able to promote to buyers, and thus build confidence, before a 'sale' (Bauer et al. 1996).

Specific strategies, increasingly drawn up by consultants and relying on the application of advanced feedback techniques such as polling and focus groups, depend on the status of the candidate, (in terms of his or her 'brand equity,' unique selling points, position in the market etc.) and market conditions (what do voters want? What are other candidates offering?). For example, the prescription for a challenger trying to attract buyers away from the 'market leader,' i.e. the leading candidate in the polls, is to attack his or her opponent in a specific 'market segment' employing messages and propositions that clearly differentiate them from their opponents. If candidates did focus on image rather than issues, it would not be surprising given the opinion that 'emotion is what sells products *and* politicians' (Newman 1999: 89). Furthermore, there is an argument that 'the whole electoral process rewards candidates whose skills are rhetorical rather than substantive' (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994: 829).[13]

An alternative approach to explaining candidate advertising strategies is based in rational choice theory and asks 'why negative campaigning occurs, when it occurs, who engages in it and at whom it is aimed' (Sigelman and Shiraev 2002: 46). Riker argues that there is no point in attempting to change the minds of those already decided (1996). Therefore, the rational course of action is instead to try to convince voters who are undecided. Riker argues that this is best achieved by convincing voters of the terrible consequences of an opponents' victory. Davis and Ferrantino's (1996) also claim that rational actors exaggerate the consequences of an opponents' potential victory. Because both of these models conceive negative strategies as underlyingly rational, negative campaigning is predicted to be the norm.

[13] In this sense the 2008 Presidential campaign between Democratic nominee Barack Obama (noted for his rhetorical and oratorical skills) and the Republican candidate John McCain (a less skilled and engaging public speaker) offered an interesting comparison.

Skaperdas and Grofman (1995) on the other hand, see attack strategies as conditionally rational, i.e. in certain conditions it is rational to attack, but not always. Their model assumes that the level of support for each candidate is known and that candidates are fighting for the support of undecided voters. Pursuing a positive campaign both candidates can win votes from this pool, but depending on the state of the race, candidates suffer from the problem of diminishing returns as the pool of undecided voters shrinks. Ultimately, a trailing candidate cannot win simply by splitting the pool of undecided voters evenly with an opponent. It therefore behoves trailing candidates to attack, in order to convince voters to leave the opponent's camp for the undecided pool. On the other hand, if a frontrunner can win without having to convert an opponent's supporters, he or she has no incentive to attack (*Ibid*: 52). Whereas the decision to attack in the Skaperdas and Grofman model is entirely a result of candidates' relative standing in the race, Doron and On (1983) also take candidate positions in the issue space into consideration. Their model predicts that a candidate will only attack opponents who are close enough in the issue space that their supporters might possibly change their support. Thus the greater the ideological distance between two candidates, the less likely an attack, i.e. 'one shakes the closest tree with the most apples on, so that they will fall next to him' (*Ibid*: 221).[14] Simon's (2002) model, which formalizes Petrocik's (1996) issue ownership approach, offers similar predictions, but focuses on the selective emphasis of issues and the type of issues that candidates choose to attack on. In Simon's model there are damaging

[14] This argument may appear particularly strong in multi-party elections where other candidates occupy the intervening issue space. However, other considerations may mitigate against harsh attacks. For instance, closer ideological competitors often represent more feasible partners in coalition systems, thus attacking potential coalition partners may be a risky strategy when thinking about competing for governmental power after the election campaign (van der Eijk 2000). This point heeds us to recognize that various models and model predictions can pertain to quite different situations, e.g. a two party system where one party usually wins an unequivocal mandate to form the government is rather different to a multi-party system where governmental coalitions are the norm.

consequences for candidates engaging in 'dialogue' with their competitors. Simon thus predicts that rational candidates avoid attacking on issues 'owned' by their competitors.

While candidates may not make use of these abstract predictions,[15] there are numerous potential benefits to a negative advertising strategy which candidates and their consultants are certainly cognizant of (see for instance Jamieson and Waldman's (2001) 'insider's view' of the 2000 US presidential campaign). These include potentially undermining an opponent's support, making one's own message more memorable (especially important in a highly diverse media environment where voters are no longer a captive audience) and gaining leverage over the campaign agenda (Damore 2002). Positive ads delimiting a candidate's position on the issues may have clear benefits in familiarizing voters with issues and concerns salient to the candidate, but they also allow opponents a free ride to do the same for themselves without interference. Employing an attack to elicit a response from an opponent gives the sponsoring candidate leverage over an opponent's campaign by potentially forcing him or her 'off message.' An attack may force an opponent to campaign on issues where the ad sponsor has a comparative advantage, for example in terms of issue ownership (Budge and Farlie 1983; Budge et al. 2001; Petrocik 2004; Simon 2002). A further advantage of a negative strategy in the post-modern campaign environment is that an innovative or particularly virulent attack can achieve notoriety in the news media, gaining much more exposure for a candidate or his/her message than paid airtime alone could achieve (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Damore 2002). With these advantages in mind, it is not a surprise to learn that campaign

[15] It is nonetheless interesting to note that John McCain's attacks on Barack Obama in October 2008, in the face of a disadvantageous economy and the failure of his campaign to resonate with independent voters, were fully in line with the predictions of the formal models reviewed here.

consultants advise clients to 'go negative early, often and right through Election Day. If attacked hit back even harder. It's easier to give voters a negative impression of your opponent than it is to improve their image of you,' (Kamber 1997; cited in Lau et al. 1999: 851).[16]

There is evidently a feeling amongst campaign consultants and the parties and candidates who authorize funds for ad design and dissemination, that negative strategies are 'effective' (again see Jamieson and Waldman 2001). Effective here means that an ad has the desired effect on voters, i.e. convincing them to vote for the sponsor or withdraw support from an opponent.[17] However, evidence on the question of whether or not negative ads 'work' is, at best, inconclusive (Ridout and Franz 2008). In their survey of findings in the research literature, Lau et al. conclude that *'there is no consistent evidence in the research literature that negative political campaigning 'works' in achieving the electoral results that attackers desire*' (2007: 1185, italics in the original). They do concede that 'attacks probably do undermine evaluations of the candidates they target,' but at the same time attacks 'usually bring evaluations of the attackers down even more, and the net effect on vote choice is nil' (*Ibid*: 1185). That notwithstanding, if candidates *perceive* advantages in going negative, they will continue to do so. Therefore the question of whether negative advertising has damaging effects on the democratic process by de-motivating and demobilizing voters and inhibiting their focus on substantive political matters and policies is important. For this reason it has generated substantial scholarly attention.

[16] Candidates may also try to 'inoculate' themselves against attacks by running 'defensive ads,' i.e. messages that prefigure an attack they think is imminent. For example, if a candidate suspects that an attack on his or her integrity is imminent, they may run an ad admitting a fault but putting a more positive spin on the expected content of the attack. On the other hand, candidates may eschew defensive ads for a 'pre-emptive' strike. For discussion, see Pfau and Burgoon (1988) and for recent empirical findings see An and Pfau (2004).

[17] In the narrower sense, an ad would also be effective if it set out to portray an opponent as weak on crime, and it successfully created this impression in voters' minds.

2.6 Unintended effects: The malaise thesis.

I have discussed the 'intended effects' of negative advertising above, i.e. what candidates set out to achieve by running negative ads. Yet political scientists have been interested, to a much greater extent, by the 'unintended effects' of exposure to negative advertising at the voter level. The academic debate took off in the mid 1990s with a series of empirical studies, experimental and survey based, that appeared to establish a link between exposure to negative advertising and low voter turnout in the US. In one of the most influential of these 'malaise' or 'demobilization' studies, Ansolabehere and Iyengar's (1995) experimental results showed that exposure to televised 'attack advertising' led to lower internal efficacy (i.e. the feeling that one is able to participate in the democratic process) and a lower probability of voting. In the case of the latter, a reported reduction of 5% after exposure to just one negative ad (*Ibid*: 65). The study also discovered that negative advertising reinforced and intensified existing partisan preferences and beliefs and that moderate voters (or 'independents') were particularly likely to tune out after exposure. These findings led the authors to argue that negative advertising would damage American democracy by leading to a smaller and more polarized electorate in which parties would have the incentive to mobilize only core supporters with extreme appeals (see also Ansolabehere et al. 1999).

Several contemporaneous studies appeared to corroborate these findings. Using survey data for the 1990 Senate races, Kahn and Kenney (1999) found that turnout was lower in races in which ads (and media coverage) were deemed to be negative. Effects were again especially pronounced on independents and in races that were characterised as full of 'mudslinging.' Pinkleton et al. (2002) designed

experiments to test the effects of negative advertising on feelings of negativity and cynicism. They found that exposure to negative ads led to negative and cynical feelings towards both politicians *and* the media outlets that ran the ads.

The malaise thesis clearly resonated with popular commentators. In Brooks' (2006) survey of newspaper and magazine articles linking negative advertising and turnout, 65% of 165 articles between 2000 and 2005 concluded that exposure to negative ads decreased turnout. Only a handful of the same media articles expressed the possibility that negative ads could increase turnout. Ansolabehere and Iyengar's *Going Negative* (1995) is, to this day, occasionally referenced as a legitimating source for popular critiques of attack ads (Brooks 2006: 693). Yet, plausible as the malaise thesis seems, it soon faced a growing challenge from empirical studies employing a range of methods that found either no evidence of malaise or discovered a *mobilizing* effect. More damaging still, Brooks' (2006) replication of the original study using the original authors' dataset, uncovered little or no evidence to support the finding that exposure to negative ads reduces turnout.

2.7 Mobilization

The idea that negative advertising demobilizes voters was quickly reversed by a tide of empirical studies that failed to find any evidence of demobilization. Lau and colleague's (1999) early meta-analysis of the research literature found that of 117 'pertinent findings' reported in 52 published and unpublished studies, an overwhelming majority did not support the malaise thesis. It is interesting to note that in the follow-up meta-analysis eight years later, Lau et al. (2007) found more than double the number of studies (111) and 'pertinent findings' (294) across a range of electoral contexts (presidential, Senate, House and other races) predominantly in

the US. Again however, they discovered no systematic evidence in the research literature that negative ads lead to demobilization. Even empirical work on the effects of that most unseemly form of negative advertising, i.e. 'uncivil personal attack ads,' finds no evidence of a demobilizing effect (Brooks and Geer 2007).[18]

Indeed, increasingly sophisticated empirical studies discovered that exposure to negative advertising was associated with *increased* levels of turnout (Djupe and Peterson 1999; Finkel and Geer 1998; Geer and Lau 2006; Jackson and Carsey 2007; Jackson and Sides 2006). Some of the most rigorous and consistent findings are found in the work of Ken Goldstein, Paul Freedman and their collaborators on the *WiscAds* project.[19] One of the major methodological problems facing the earlier generation of researchers was measuring the extent of negativity in campaigns and estimating exposure levels. This problem was exacerbated by the electoral system and the fractured nature of media markets in the US, where candidates concentrate their advertising in certain markets and often run more negative campaigns in battleground states.[20] This problem gave rise to inequalities in measuring the tone of a campaign. For example in 1996, less than a third of Bob Dole's unique ads were negative. However, factoring in the number of times an ad aired, this number jumped to 70% (Freedman et al. 2004). The WiscAds project utilizes commercial satellite tracking technology as a solution to this problem. The CMAG technology records the airing of every ad in 70 major media markets across the US, and allows for a much more precise measure of the level of negativity in a campaign.

[18] For discussion of the results of effects-level research from a methodological perspective, see Sigelman and Kugler (2003).
[19] Officially the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project: http://wiscadproject.wisc.edu/. Use of this resource is open to all scholars, not just those based at Madison, and the number of studies using these data has grown rapidly.
[20] I.e. states where the race is close enough for candidates from both parties to have a realistic chance of winning.

In the first study based on these data, and combining survey responses from the National Election Survey (NES) for the 1996 presidential election, Goldstein and Freedman discovered that negative advertisements had a 'significant and substantial mobilizing effect,' raising both turnout levels and attention to politics (*Ibid*: 733). Contrary to earlier findings, 'citizens exposed to the greatest number of negative ads were actually more likely to vote' (*Ibid*: 723). The most recent product of the WiscAds project, a book length study covering the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, reports further evidence that 'negative campaign ads are more likely to stimulate and inform rather than to depress and obscure' (Franz et al. 2007: 19).

In the light of this body of research findings, Brooks (2006) concludes that the negative advertising/ reduced turnout debate has now effectively attained 'closure.' The majority, if not consensus, opinion is that exposure to negative advertising does not reduce turnout (*Ibid*). That is not to say that negative campaigning has no negative consequences (for a meta-analysis see Allen and Burrell 2002). Exposure may reduce levels of trust in government (Craig and Kane 2000; Globetti and Hetherington 2000) and possibly lead to 'a darker public mood' (Lau et al. 2007: 1185). However, it is likely that these effects are at least partly generated by exposure to media coverage about negative campaigning (Atkeson and Partkin 2001; Buell and Sigelman 2008).

Several explanations have been advanced for why negative ads might mobilize citizens to turn out and vote (Martin 2004). Kahn and Kenney (1999: 878) argue that negative information, as long as it is 'relevant and appropriate' (i.e. attacks that are substantive and substantiated), mobilizes for two reasons. First, because people receive mostly positive information in their daily lives, negative

messages are more salient, memorable and even exciting. Second, negative ads hold information to help people avoid potential costs (e.g. by voting for someone whose policies might hurt them), which is more salient to them than achieving potential gains (see also Polborn and Yi 2006). Goldstein and Freedman note that negative ads send strong signals that something is at stake so that every citizen's vote matters (2002: 723). They also argue that negative appeals produce stronger affective responses, leading to greater enthusiasm or antipathy for a candidate and thus stronger engagement in the election. Brooks (2006) argues that positive ads tend to be ambiguous enough to appeal to everyone, whereas negative ads highlight differences, allowing voters to differentiate between candidates. Negative ads are thus more able to clarify voters' preferences for a certain candidate and allow them to make a decision. Brooks' argument about specificity being more important than tone is taken up in the following chapter.[21]

Empirical research on the 'mobilizing effects' of negative advertising suggest that 'interest in the campaign' increases with levels of negativity (Bartels 2000; although see Brooks and Geer 2007). Voters' knowledge about the candidates and the campaign issues appears to increase with more exposure (Craig et al. 2005; Kahn and Kenney 2004; see Thorson et al. 2000 for alternative findings). Studies testing for effects on memory, have in the main found an increase in voters' recall of messages associated with exposure to negative ads (Basil et al. 1991; Brader 2005; Bradley et al. 2007; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Newhagen and Reeves 1991; Shapiro

[21] This thesis does not examine voter effects but it is appropriate to comment at this point that if the degree of substance and specificity has an effect on voters (and that negative ads provide more of this type of content) then the debate over negative advertising effects is incomplete as long as substance and specificity are not controlled for. Researchers have only recently begun to explore this issue (e.g. Franz et al. 2007).

and Rieger 1992; Wattenburg and Brians 1996; for opposite findings see Kaid et al. 1992 and Thorson et al. 1991).

It would be wrong to imply that the case is closed for voter level effects research, but taken as a whole, the developments in the research literature summarized above have had two significant consequences. First, in terms of the mobilization/malaise debate, American political scientists now appear to have been released from 'their obsess[ion] with voter apathy' (Scammell 1999: 721). Rather than focusing solely on turnout, political scientists have begun to ask more nuanced questions about the way in which campaign advertising affects democratic participation and legitimacy.[22] Second, the finding that negative ads may increase learning, interest and mobilize voters has prompted political scientists to reconsider the role of negative advertising. In the following chapter I discuss this in more detail and provide a rationale for looking at negative advertising in terms of its contribution to the information environment available to voters.

[22] For example, addressing the effects of civil and uncivil messages (Brooks and Geer 2007; Mutz and Reeves 2005) and giving extra weight to voter responses conditioned by partisanship, gender and race (e.g. Valentino et al. 2002).

3. Negative advertising, information and democracy

During the first presidential election campaign in Taiwan in 1996, incumbent President Lee Teng-hui ran a series of positive TV ads in which he reminisced, amongst other things, about quitting smoking and courting his wife. In these long ads, Lee was pictured for the entire duration in a comfortable armchair speaking endearingly about his personal experiences. At a time of national crisis,[23] Lee barely mentioned his policies or those of his competitors. Indeed, Lee's 'fire-side chat'-type ads gave little indication that he was standing for election to the highest office in the land. Lee did not engage the radical pro-independence message of the DPP's Peng Ming-min or respond to the personal attacks launched against him by the New Party candidate Lin Yang-kang. Lee's ads may have been carefully and cleverly designed to show him as determined, calm under pressure and 'just like you or me' (Cheng 1996), but how did these ads help Taiwanese, voting for their President for the first time, make an informed decision about the comparative merits of the candidates? In a watershed election at a critical juncture in Taiwan's political development and faced with an ongoing national security crisis, Lee's ads contributed little of substance to the information environment.

These observations would not come as a surprise to many students of campaign advertising. As Ken Goldstein notes of campaigning in the US, 'positive ads are a guy in khakis walking on the beach with his dog or sitting in front of a fireplace in a fuzzy sweater; and that simply doesn't have a lot of information.'[24] Although this claim is an exaggeration (positive ads *can be* specific and substantive),

[23] Namely the PRC missile exercises in the Taiwan Strait that were perhaps designed to influence the outcome of the election in favour of more pro-China candidates than Lee.
[24] Quoted in *The Washington Post*, Nov. 3rd 2002.

a number of empirical studies demonstrate that negative ads generally contain a higher level of information than positive ads. Several political scientists argue that that this is a systematic phenomenon (Mayer 1996; Geer 2006). This naturally leads us to ask why negative ads are apparently information-rich and equally, what constitutes information. More fundamentally, it is necessary to address why an increasing number of political scientists advocate evaluating campaign advertising in terms of the contribution it makes to the information environment. This chapter addresses these questions: in short, why is information important? And why is information a relevant criterion to assess campaign advertising? I subsequently discuss how the definition, as well as the estimated importance of 'information,' varies somewhat between different theories of voting behaviour. The final section sets out existing attempts by political communication scholars to evaluate, and explain, the content of negative advertising.

3.1 Why information?

The shift away from conceiving negative advertising as damaging to democracy has largely been prompted by two sets of empirical observations. First, the body of empirical findings discussed in the previous chapter that shows voters' 'resilience' in the face of negative campaigning (Brooks 2006). Although the 'mobilization' finding seems counter-intuitive (after all, voters consistently say that they dislike negative ads, e.g. West et al. 2006), attempts to explain it have led to a second observation. Invoking the connection between levels of knowledge, interest and participation, researchers have observed that negative ads constitute a rich source of information, particularly compared with positive ads. Negative ads are also more 'stimulating'—generating stronger affective responses which in turn lead to greater

cognitive gains (Kahn and Kenney 1999). If negative ads are packed with substantive information and voters are more likely to remember and learn from it, they may have a positive role to play in democratic election campaigns. This is the view put forward by a growing number of political scientists (e.g. Brooks 2006; Geer 2006, Franz et al. 2007; Freedman et al 2004). Although taking different approaches and focusing on different aspects of campaigning, collectively these studies constitute a 'defence of negativity' (to borrow the title of Geer's (2006) monograph). The key point that unites all of these studies is a focus on information.

There is broad agreement amongst analysts of campaigning on the importance of information. This is broadly motivated by the view that information is necessary for representative democracy to function well (Lipsitz 2004). Lau and Redlawsk's (2006) formulation of how democracy works characterizes many scholars in this field:

> 'Democracy succeeds when government, in some broad sense, represents the will of the people. … Thus citizens voting for leaders who best represent their views and holding those leaders (or their political parties) accountable for their performance in office at the next election, make democracy work' (2006: 3).

For these functions of democracy to succeed however, sufficient relevant information is required. As Quelch and Jocz argue, the availability of information is 'essential to well-functioning democracies' (2007: 95). In Lau and Redlawsk's view of democracy (which is shared by many), elections are conceived as the means by which the 'will of the people' is expressed through the selection of candidates or parties that best represents the majority, or plurality, of voter's interests (see Dahl

1971). The role of voters is to choose the party or candidate who best represents their interests. For this to be possible, voters must have some awareness of their own preferences and sufficient relevant knowledge of the contending candidates. The second task that voters are expected to fulfil is to sanction or reward an incumbent for their job performance, i.e. to hold office holders accountable. Again, voters cannot achieve this in the absence of relevant information about an incumbent's record.

If citizens in a democracy should be enabled and encouraged to communicate their preferences in favour of particular policies and to reward or sanction incumbents, it follows that sufficient relevant information should be made available to them through the election campaign. In a democracy, as in consumer transactions, voters require information on the available choices in order to form the opinions that they express at the ballot box, or in choosing a product in the marketplace (Nelson 1974). In the absence of information about candidates' positions on the issues it is not possible for voters to identify and choose the candidate who best reflects their own position. Likewise if no information exists on the performance of incumbents, voters are in no position to make an informed decision to reward or sanction them.[25] The changing focus of research on negative advertising is underscored by the proposition that the campaign should enable voters to make these 'reasoned choices.'[26] Put another way, as a major communication tool used in the campaign,

[25] It is unlikely that such an extreme lack of information exists in contemporary democracies, particularly ones with developed media systems. Indeed, an information environment lacking in any kind of information on candidate positions or incumbent performance would almost certainly cast doubt on such a system being viewed as a democracy.

[26] Reasoned choices involve a higher degree of cognitive decision making than vote choices based on habit, affect, cleavage affinity etc. Making a reasoned choice does not negate the possibility that voters make mistakes and choose the 'wrong candidate,' but over the whole electorate these mistakes should even out and as long as a voter believes that he or she is voting for the candidate that best represents their interests, it is a 'correct choice' (Lau and Redlawsk 2006).

campaign advertising should be judged by the extent to which it allows voters to fulfil the democratic tasks ascribed to them.

The acknowledgement that 'content matters' has prompted several political scientists to argue that negative advertising has a constructive role to play in democratic campaigns (see Franz et al. 2007 for a review). Some forms of information, i.e. recognition of faults and failings that ad sponsors do not include in their self-promotional ads, may only be available through negative ads (Mayer 1996: Polborn and Yi 2006). Other types of information, as I will discuss later on, are more consistently available in negative ads (Geer 2006). Candidates have the chance to promote their own policy plans and qualifications for the job, but there is an equal need for their proposals, credentials and pledges to be questioned. In the absence of such criticism, candidates' 'flaws, faults and flights of fancy' may be neglected or finessed (Jamieson et al. 2000: 45). Candidates' assessments of their own records of governance and credentials are seldom self-critical. Negative ads may therefore be useful in pointing out problems and providing a counter-balance to exaggerated claims and 'glory grabbing.' A strong argument can be made to the effect that if voters are to make reasoned choices, they require such a mix of informational inputs. For this reason, Brooks and Geer argue that 'it is hard to imagine an election that would be informative without some degree of both positive and negative campaigning' (2007: 1).[27]

Underlying the preceding arguments is the assumption is that the supply of relevant information translates into vote choices that are consistent with the perspective that elections should enable voters to identify and select the 'best'

[27] The definition of what constitutes positive and negative advertising is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

candidate. Although the propensity of voters to pay attention and their ability to process campaign information has long been debated (Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997), researchers can also cite findings that voters are at least minimally able to assimilate and make reasonable choices based on the information they receive (Key 1966; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Zaller 1992). Furthermore, Franz et al. (2007) argue that generally short and unambiguous candidate advertising appears ideally suited to the task of transmitting information. The next question that needs to be addressed is what constitutes the kind of information that is potentially beneficial to voters and by extension, democracy.

3.2 What kind of information?

It is less controversial to argue that voters need information to inform reasoned choices than it is to identify exactly what kinds of information voters require or benefit from. In part this is due to different concepts of how democracy should work, and the fact that scholarly opinion is divided on how, and to what extent, voters learn from campaign information. The strong opinion in recent research is that voters do learn from information they receive during a campaign (Sulkin and Swigger 2008). Albeit this learning is often moderated by a partisan lens and new information (i.e. that received during the campaign) does not hold the same weight as partisan predispositions (Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002; Zaller 1992). A further controversy is whether voters do, or should, make decisions based on prospective or retrospective concerns. This section sets out both sides of this ongoing debate in the literature on voting behaviour, before elaborating the position underlying current theories of negative advertising to be tested in this thesis.

3.2.1 Prospective voting

Rational Choice Models

There are two extremes of rational choice theory. At one end of the spectrum, 'rational voters' would not vote at all, because the chance of their vote making a difference to the outcome of the election is too small to make it worthwhile. However, as Green and Shapiro (1994) point out, supposedly free-riding citizens do in fact turn out in great numbers. At the other extremity, rational voters would invest the requisite time and effort to find out everything there is to know about every candidate in every election. Citizens would then use this constantly updating store of information to evaluate candidates in terms of the relative effect their election would have on the voter's own self interest (Enelow and Hinich 1984). In this scenario 'rational voters' are naturally endowed, and motivated by interest maximization, to act like 'omniscient calculators' (Lupia et al. 2000). Such voters would always be able to make a decision when faced with alternatives, to rank all alternatives transitively, to choose the alternative with the highest preference ranking, and to do this without fail every time he or she is faced with these alternatives (Downs 1957: 6). This type of rational voter would promote 'democratic' outcomes at elections by ensuring that they always vote in their own best interests.[28]

However these extreme or stylized depictions do not accurately reflect the majority of rational choice-based theory or analysis of rational voting. Many analysts do not assume perfect or complete information (or predict zero turnout), but instead explore voting behaviour under various conditions of uncertainty (e.g. Alvarez 1996). Downs' (1957) too, paid ample attention to information costs. His version of rational

[28] Whilst this is 'democratic' in the narrow sense, see Arrow (1951) on the problems of aggregating individual preferences.

voting acknowledged that voters require informational shortcuts in order to be rational (see also the discussion of 'bounded rationality' below). Downs also prefigured later research on 'bi-product learning' (Prior 2007; Franz et al. 2007). In this view, voters might be willing to incur low costs to pick up easily available information about candidates, but are not motivated (or cognitively equipped) to be 'omniscient calculators' once the marginal cost of new information outweighs potential gains. Lau and Redlawsk refer to this as 'optimization under constraints' (2006: 7) and this idea underpins both prospective voting models and retrospective voting (discussed below) where voters use information on past performance to evaluate the candidates (Fiorina 1981). They do so because retrospective information is more reliable than gambling on promises about the future, and the costs of attaining and processing this information are lower (*Ibid*). While retrospective voters take a shortcut in concentrating on candidates' past performance as a measuring stick, doing so can also promote democratic outcomes, if we conceive the central function of democratic elections as the means by which previously elected officials are held accountable for their actions.

Behavioural models

Behavioural models assume that voting decisions are strongly conditioned by enduring social orientations learned at an early age. These long-term dispositions, most importantly partisanship, colour and outweigh the candidate's issue stands, characteristics and job performance. Since these factors are rendered short-term and comparatively unimportant, behavioural models predict that campaigns make little headway against ingrained ideas and identifications. The classic statement of this

kind is found in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960). Voters were discovered to be disinterested and unknowledgeable about politics and relied overwhelmingly on partisan orientations to make their vote choice. Their decisions were essentially based on early social conditioning that tied them to one or other of the main parties in the US. Since parties change slowly, the need to seek costly information is much reduced. As long as one knew which party a candidate represented, that was sufficient information to compensate for a lack of reliable information on the candidates' policy positions.

Further research on the effects of partisan predispositions on vote choice demonstrate that this kind of conditioning reinforces itself through psychological processes (Festinger 1957; Zaller 1992) whereby voters 'are motivated to maintain their prior convictions' (Lau and Redlawsk 2006: 11). Voters of this kind do not often seek out information, passively relying on information relayed cost-free and haphazardly via the media. When they do however, they disproportionately seek confirmatory information about their own party's candidate in order to avoid 'cognitive dissonance' (Festinger 1957). Derogatory information about their party's candidate tends to be tuned out (Zaller 1992). The extent to which this mode of decision-making fosters 'democratic outcomes' appears lower than vote choices based on more information, although voting based solely on party labels has been shown to deliver choices in line with voters' policy preferences (Lau and Redlawsk 1997).

Intuitive voting

Voting models based on the concept of 'bounded rationality' (Simon 1955) or 'low information rationality' (Popkin 1991) recognize that people are wont to use heuristic devices to lower the costs associated with gathering and processing information.[29] Instead of engaging in the draining search for information and conducting cost-benefit analyses—and in the absence of the strongly felt orientations—this mode of voter decision-making is characterized as being more 'intuitive.' Relying on simple categorizations and stereotypical associations, these voters' decisions are 'better understood as semiautomatic responses to frequently encountered situations than as carefully weighed probabilistic calculations of the consequences associated with the different alternatives' (Lau and Redlawsk 2006: 15). Considering the low level of voters' political knowledge manifest in American survey responses (Campbell et al. 1960; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1987), and the absence of consistent or fully formed attitudes or positions on the issues, this intuitive mode of voting seems plausible.

However, the thought that vast numbers of voters were making voting choices based on 'gut rationality' (Popkin 1991), did not inspire great confidence in the citizen choices that were theoretically driving American democracy. Nevertheless, further work on heuristics that showed that voters could come to reliable decisions, approaching a level of rationality, based on mental shortcuts requiring a minimum of information (Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998).[30] Popkin (1991) identifies numerous heuristics, including assigning candidates' policy

[29] Of course the political party is the most obvious cue that voters follow as outlined in the preceding sub-section (Campbell et al. 1960).

[30] Another strand of research on the properties of collective opinion demonstrated that individual errors in rationality could be cancelled out in the aggregate (Page and Shapiro, 1992).

positions based on their demographic profile, the positions of their supporters or using personality as a prospective measure of political character.[31] Other heuristics include relying on endorsements from close acquaintances, trusted elites or social groups (Brady and Sniderman 1985; Sniderman et al. 1991), choosing the most familiar candidate (i.e. the 'recognition heuristic;' Goldstein and Gigerenzer 2002) or eliminating from consideration candidates that have no chance of winning (Bartels 1988). A more controversial idea is Brady and Sniderman's (1985) 'likeability heuristic,' which involves the use of affective feelings toward certain political groups, e.g. conservatives and liberals, to judge where a candidate stands on policy. That voters use heuristics of one kind or another is generally accepted (with such a glut of political information accompanying contemporary campaigns they *must* use some kind of shortcut), but the extent to which people use heuristics and whether they lead to 'good decisions' has been questioned (Kuklinski and Quirk 2000). Indeed Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996: 51-3) question whether voters have sufficient contextual knowledge to use heuristics intelligently at all, bringing us full circle to the haphazard 'gut reactions' described earlier.

The Correct Voting Model

Research on voting behaviour, indeed analyses of campaign advertising too, often see decision-making in static terms. This is reinforced by reliance on cross-sectional survey responses. However it is important to keep in mind that campaigns are dynamic ongoing processes. For this reason Lau and Redlawsk (2006) use 'dynamic process tracing' to uncover how voters seek out and process information and come to

[31] Another reason for candidates to focus on image.

decisions through the course of the campaign. Instead of looking at the direction of vote choice, their dependent variable is the 'correctness' of the choice, i.e. the ability to choose the candidate that best reflects one's interests. Put another way, correct voting is a decision that 'is the same as would have been made under conditions of full information' (*Ibid*: 74). This is based on the normative position that 'if voters cast votes that fail to represent their interests [the] linkage between the vote and government accountability [is] severely damaged' (*Ibid*: 15). The objective of the study is to uncover which decision-making strategies lead to correct voting and under what conditions the chosen strategy and its success in converting information into correct choices, vary during a real dynamic campaign

Importing behavioural decision theory from psychology, Lau and Redlawsk acknowledge that voters reach their decisions in a number of ways. In the acquisition and processing of the requisite information to enable all of these different strategies is the tension between making 'good decisions' and making 'easy decisions.' Various factors can shift the balance between good and easy decisions, with concomitant effects on the quality of the decision-making. For instance, the desire to make a good decision increases with the perceived importance of the decision, and the desire to make an easy decision increases with the difficulty of the task (*Ibid*: 45). These tendencies are well known to students of campaign advertising. For example, one of the arguments in defence of negative advertising is that it increases the feeling that something is at stake (Kahn and Kenney 1999), thereby encouraging citizens to pay attention and to vote. The main point to draw from Lau and Redlawsk's experiments is that there is clearly more than one way that voters can arrive at 'correct' decisions. The authors themselves argue that it does not matter how voters

reach a decision, as long as a majority of them do ultimately make the correct choice (Lau and Redlawsk 2006: 73).[32] However, it does matter when the task is to judge the extent to which the content of campaign advertising potentially enhances or hinders the quality of voter decision-making.

3.2.2 Retrospective voting

If representative government, as opposed to say, direct democracy, is the only feasible way that modern nation-states can be run democratically (Mill 1975 [1863]) then an argument can be made in favour of accountability as the standard by which the electoral process should be judged. Many modern democratic theorists have developed this argument (e.g. Dahl 1971; Schumpeter 1942). Schmitter and Karl's definition of democracy states that 'modern political democracy is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives' (1991: 76). One way in which voters are potentially able to achieve accountability is to base their vote choice on retrospective information about the performance of office holders.

The majority of research on accountability in the voting literature has centred on the question of economic voting (Fiorina 1981; Key 1961; Tufte 1978). Instead of conceiving vote choice as a prospective decision, economic voting models build on Key's idea that 'voters may reject what they have known, or they may approve what they have known. They are not likely to be attracted in great numbers by promises of the novel or the unknown' (1961: 61). Economic voting generally refers to a 'reward-punishment,' 'sanctioning' or 'referendum' phenomenon where 'the citizen

[32] 70% of subjects in their experiments ultimately voted correctly.

votes for the government if the economy is doing all right: otherwise the vote is against' (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000: 183).[33] The threat of retrospective voting thus has the power to keep officials honest in political systems (like the US and Taiwan) where single-party government is the norm.[34] As Fiorina observes 'given political actors who fervently desire to retain their positions and who carefully anticipate public reaction to their records as a means to that end, a retrospective voting electorate will enforce accountability' (1981: 11). Simply put, voters may use past performance as heuristic guide to predicting future performance (Downs 1957), thereby prompting policymakers to anticipate reactions to their policies. Retrospective voting models essentially describe a principal-agent relationship between citizens and government where 'voters are the principal and have the power to sanction or reward their agent' (Duch 2001: 895; Ferejohn 1986). Or in Anderson's words:

> Democratic elections are expected to ensure accountability via economic voting because they held intermittently but regularly, and because they allow citizens to express broad and blunt approval or disapproval of the government's record in an area of policy they can relate to and understand. Accountability rooted in economic voting thus constitutes a minimalist, but nevertheless legitimate vision of democracy as a form of government, which allows ill-informed electorates to exert a circumscribed measure of control through their ability to 'throw the rascals out' (2007: 277).

To be able to act in this fashion, voters need to be informed about the government's performance on the economy, and if we broaden the scope of official

[33] However as van der Brug et al (2007) demonstrate, economic voting is not necessarily retrospective, and can also manifest itself in prospective ways.
[34] In other systems where institutional arrangements mean that multi-party coalition governments are common, retrospective voting theories can work rather differently.

responsibility, other areas of public policy as well. In the US however, many years of survey research reveals that voters are often not well informed and have low levels of political knowledge, which seemingly mitigates against both prospective and retrospective voting. However, while voters may not know much about the macroeconomic policies of incumbent governments, citizens do pick up clues about the economy from other events, such as finding a job or buying a house—information that is then transferable to their vote choice. As formulated by Fiorina, 'citizens typically have one comparatively hard bit of data: they know what life has been like during the incumbent's administrations. They need *not* know the precise economic or foreign policies of the incumbent administration in order to see or feel the *results* of those policies' (1981: 5). Voters might not know about macroeconomic policy, but they do know about their own economic situation (Aidt 2000).[35] If voters can draw on cost-cutting informational cues from their own experience then 'limited information need not prevent people from making reasoned choices' (Lupia and McCubbins 1998: 4). For this reason, Fiorina argues that 'retrospective voting is both individually reasonable and systemically desirable (1978: 430).

With both a normative and rational basis, retrospective voting has attracted a lot of scholarly attention. Prior to the 1990's it was common wisdom that 'when you think economics, think elections. When you think elections, think economics' (Tufte 1978: 68). Retrospective voting models with vote choice as the dependent variable and the state of the economy as the independent variable seemed to confirm the link for Congressional and presidential elections in the US (Fiorina 1981; Kramer 1971; Tufte 1978) and in Europe (Lewis-Beck 1988). For instance, empirical analyses

[35] Against this, it is important to acknowledge that egotropic or 'pocketbook' voting (i.e. vote choices based on one's own economic conditions) is often shown to be less prevalent than sociotropic economic voting based on broader economic conditions (van der Brug et al. 2007).

showed strong correlations between the state of the economy in election year and the vote share of congressional candidates from the incumbent party (Fiorina 1978). As Anderson writes, economic voting took on 'the ring of an incontrovertible social scientific fact' (Anderson 2007: 271). But, he continues, 'the trouble with these claims—as Al Gore and John Major can attest— is that they are only intermittently borne out by the facts' (2007: 271). More recent research demonstrates that economic voting is contingent on various psychological and institutional factors (*Ibid*; van der Brug et al. 2007) and the predictive accuracy of economic voting models varies greatly across nations (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2001). Empirical research on Taiwan at the time of the first presidential election in 1996 suggests that voters' decisions were based on both prospective and retrospective concerns and that these varied according to the issue area (Hsieh et al. 1998). For instance, voters were inclined to judge candidates on cross-Strait relations more retrospectively than law and order and ethnic relations. On the economy, voters were found to base their vote choices on both retrospective and prospective information.

3.3 How to judge information in campaign ads?

The preceding sections reveal two major issues in specifying a standard by which to measure the informational content of campaign advertising. First, opinion is divided on whether prospective or retrospective voting provides the appropriate normative or empirical model for converting vote choices into democratic outcomes. Second, it is clear that voters learn in different ways from different kinds of information. Evaluating the kind of information that facilitates voter learning and decision-making is an extremely complicated task. Information is heterogeneous: there is not one kind of information that promotes reasoned decision making. The electorate is

equally heterogeneous. Voters differ in terms of their demographics, cognitive capacities and existing predispositions and therefore can be expected to learn from different kinds of information, at different rates and in different ways. Research on differential information processing and the use of cognitive short-cuts by different demographic groups is inconclusive. Though representing the current state of the art, the conclusion to Lau and Redlawsk's (2006) study is necessarily circumspect—voters use a range of different methods to decide who to vote for. This conclusion has implications for the task of evaluating what kind of campaign information facilitates 'democratic' decision-making. Namely, if we were to rely on all the multifarious strategies that voters use to make decisions, our measure of campaign advertising would not discriminate anything since *any kind of information could conceivably help some voters reach a decision*. Clearly then, delimiting a standard for defining and measuring 'good' information requires selection from a number of possibilities.

In his systematic analysis of the informational content of negative advertising to date, Geer (2006) selects a normative standard based on retrospective voting. This decision allows him to define and operationalize his concept of information based on a clearly explicated notion of how democracy should work. Rather than looking at information in terms of its absolute presence or absence, Geer treats information as a commodity that is available in different qualities and quantities. From this supply of information voters may *potentially* derive the data they need to make a reasoned choice to sanction or reward office holders and to compare the relative merits of

competing candidates.[36] His evaluation of campaign advertising is usefully based on measuring the relative quality and quantity of information contained in positive and negative ads.

The main thrust of Geer's argument is that positive and negative messages are systematically different because the societal norm 'innocent until proven guilty' demands that candidates provide supporting evidence to make their negative appeals credible. Voters might be inclined to accept a positive claim at face value, but claims that criticize others (e.g. '*my opponent is corrupt and incompetent*') risk turning voters off if they lack some substantiated basis. Evaluating this basis is increasingly facilitated by media commentators, ad-watches and fact-checks in the mainstream media and online (Cappela and Jamieson 1994; Tedesco et al. 2000). Prior effects research demonstrates that negative claims that are not perceived to be fair or credible, risk a backlash (Garramone 1984). On the other hand, criticism that is perceived as having a basis in fact is more likely to be accepted as a part of democratic competition (Fan and Jasperson 2002; Meirick 2005; O'Cass 2002).

In order to demonstrate the substantive basis for their negative claims, Geer argues that candidates provide evidence to back them up. The first consequence of providing evidence is that it helps render claims falsifiable, thereby reducing the likelihood of 'deception' (for discussion of this point see Jamieson et al. 2000: 45; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997; Spero 1980). The need to provide evidence also moulds the content of negative advertising in two important ways. First, attacking on ideological or diffuse valence issues is problematic, because of the difficulty in marshalling evidence. Thus negative ads may be more likely to focus on specific

[36] Whether or not voters choose or are able to use this information is of course a question for further research. The key point for research on campaign advertising is that a standard is identified for evaluating the content of campaign advertising.

policy issues, where sources of evidence are more abundant. For example, in normal circumstances a candidate could not credibly accuse an opponent of favouring higher unemployment, but she could criticize an opponent's policies for reducing unemployment. Second, since presidential candidates' past records invariably contain a rich seam of evidence to mine, negative ads may be more likely to focus on candidates' previous experience of governance, failed policies, voting records, broken promises etc. To continue the unemployment example, candidates could provide evidence of an opponent's support for a particular bill or, where an opponent is in an executive position, levels of unemployment. In this way negative ads furnish voters with information about past policy performance, thereby contributing to the kind of out-party criticism that is necessary for holding office holders accountable (Schattschneider 1960). Geer goes so far as to claim that 'negativity (and the threat of it) makes accountability possible' (2006: 13).

Some scholars though are ambivalent about the validity of 'evidence' provided by candidates in their ads. The potential for negative ads to mislead and deceive has long been a concern (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997; Spero 1980). There is a danger that the use of 'fake' evidence or the deliberate misrepresentation of 'the facts' may lend legitimacy to false claims and facilitate the spread of *misinformation*. In this scenario the informational benefits of providing evidence would be reversed. Clearly it matters to the argument about improving the information environment that the evidence used to support claims is 'real' and accurate. In this study I do not check the veracity of evidence used to support claims. However, I argue that the deliberate use of false evidence is not in candidates' best interests.

Supporting claims with evidence does not ensure the veracity of those claims, but specific criticisms supported with evidence are more vulnerable to falsification than vague promotional claims that may be equally misleading. With the increase in media attention to candidates' ads and regular ad-watches and fact-checks in mainstream and online media, candidates increasingly run the risk of being caught disseminating misleading messages. Not only can this create scepticism about the campaign, misleading ads represent an easy target for an opponent and can become an inadvertent campaign issue detracting attention from the original message. Furthermore, while statistics can be used obliquely and out of context quotes can give a distorted image of 'the truth,' the same can be said for self promotional ads—which are expected to be less frequently supported with falsifiable evidence. As Jamieson et al. observe, 'in some cases deception is more common in advocacy than in attack ads' (2000: 50). Consider a prominent American campaign consultant's *unprompted* comment that, 'we have a joke in the business: the only difference between negative and positive ads is that negative ads have facts in them' (quoted in Geer 2006: 53). Campaign ads may sometimes contain exaggerated and partial claims, and the use of evidence may sometimes be oblique, but the disincentives to use false evidence are quite strong.[37]

Defenders of negative advertising argue that both positive and negative messages are necessary to provide voters with relevant information on the pros and cons of the parties and candidates (Brooks and Geer 2007; Geer 2006; Mayer

[37] Evidence is operationalized in this study as statistics and reports sourced to official departments and direct quotes. It is difficult to fake these types of evidence. Moreover, their veracity and accuracy can be, and is increasingly, checked by parties, news media and the growing number of online media, citizen journalists and political bloggers. I maintain that the blowback from being exposed as faking evidence is a powerful disincentive.

1996).[38] However, a mix of low quality messages would probably not improve the information environment. Therefore additional standards are required to evaluate the quality of information. Geer (2006) develops three indicators to compare positive and negative messages. The first indicator is the extent to which appeals are provided with supporting evidence, based on the argument that the search for evidence renders claims both more specific and, if not more 'factual,' then at least potentially falsifiable. The second indicator is the degree of focus on substantive policy issues, based on the consensus position in political science that 'voting choices based on policy concerns are superior to decisions based on party loyalty or candidate image' (Carmines and Stimson 1989: 79). The third indicator is the degree to which information is provided on policy performance. Comparing claims in this way allows comparison of the merits of positive and negative claims without having to make subjective judgements about absolute levels of information.

3.4. A caveat about information and informativeness

This section starts with a paradox: what political scientists judge to be high quality information may not in fact be the most informative, i.e. it may not lead to the largest cognitive gains for voters. For instance, highly technical and detailed analysis of macro-economic policy probably means very little to the majority of voters. Exposure to such information may even have the side-effect of confusing voters or lowering their sense of internal efficacy. On the other hand, a simple ideological cue may enable a voter to easily distinguish between two candidates and choose the one

[38] Note that 'defenders of negativity' are not necessarily *advocates* of negative advertising. They recognize that voters need the information contained in both positive and negative ads. But, since negative ads are unlikely to disappear from contemporary campaigns, they argue that it is important to recognize that they may have a beneficial role to play, *alongside positive ads*.

he or she favours. While different forms of information vary in their potential level of informativeness, this variation is not the same for all voters. A highly sophisticated voter (i.e. knowledgeable and attentive), may learn a lot from technical and detailed information on economic policy, but will make much smaller cognitive gains from simple cues like party identification.

Prior research suggests that the two primary variables affecting voter learning are cognitive ability and partisan predispositions (Iyengar and Simon 2000; Stevens et al. 2008; Tessin 2007). In terms of cognitive ability, Valentino et al. argue that 'informational benefits vary by level of awareness' (2004: 337). A similar idea informs Freedman et al.'s (2004) 'differential effects hypothesis,' which states that knowledge gains from exposure to campaign advertising are higher amongst the lowest informed section of the electorate. Tessin finds that for less knowledgeable voters, simple cues 'have greater salience and inferential power than more detailed messages' (2007: 2). Equally, candidates supply more of such cues when confronted with relatively unsophisticated voters (*Ibid*). Stevens finds variable knowledge gains amongst informed and less informed voters 'due to the different impact of mood that results from variation in cognitive capacity or motivation' (2005: 413). Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) similarly report that 'information overload' amongst less sophisticated voters leads them to 'tune out.' This is consistent with research on the preferences of lower sophisticates. For example Lipsitz et al.'s (2005: 337) findings on attitudes to campaigning—most people prefer an 'undemanding campaign.' Likewise, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse comment that 'the last thing people want is to be more involved in political decision making' (2002: 1). Research on the effects of partisanship on cognitive processes demonstrates that people are

'motivated processors' (Stevens et al. 2008: 527) and as such, they process information according to whether it conforms or challenges pre-existing beliefs. Adverse information may be tuned out (Zaller 1992) denied, rationalized or distorted (Westen 2007). By contrast, 'criticisms of an opponent by a candidate they support are expected and confirmatory—and voters are unlikely to scrutinize such claims closely' (Stevens et al. 2008: 529).

The point of this discussion is to acknowledge that voters learn in different ways and different types of voter may benefit from the information they are exposed to at different rates. Geer's concept of information, which is employed in this thesis as a way of evaluating the content of campaign advertising, is thus only a partial measure. There are alternative measures of information and I do not claim that the approach used in this thesis is definitive. For further discussion on the operationalization of information see chapter 5.

3.5 Negative advertising and information- new democracies

In his analysis of TV ads for twelve presidential campaigns between 1962 and 2004, Geer (2006) found strong empirical evidence that negative claims were consistently richer in substance, specificity and evidence. The theoretical argument developed to explain these findings suggests systematic differences between positive and negative advertising results from an apparently general condition: candidates' need for their claims to be credible. There is no reason to believe that candidates in any democratic context are free from the requirement or desire for their advertising to be credible. It is reasonable to think therefore, that the content of advertising in Taiwan should be similar to that discovered in the US. Supportive findings in Taiwan would add

weight to the claim that the differences between positive and negative advertising are systematic and generalizable beyond the US; in this case to a newer and non-western democracy.

There is another reason why Taiwan is an appropriate case for analyzing campaign advertising from the perspective of its role in democratic election campaigns. In research on new democracies election campaigning receives relatively little attention from comparativists or area specialists, who, perhaps understandably, prioritize more pressing issues in the transition to and consolidation of the democratic system. Nonetheless, the importance of campaigns in new democracies should not be neglected. This is particularly so with regard to the provision of information, which can play an important role in reducing voter uncertainty about political actors. Empirical research has shown that variable levels of voter uncertainty can play a role in strengthening or weakening political parties and in the perceived legitimacy of elections (Carey and Reynolds 2007; Chu and Diamond 1999; Lawson and McCann 2005). Without overstating the point, campaign communications in new democracies have the potential, *to some extent*, to influence the consolidation of the democratic system. The legitimacy and 'quality' of democracy constitute two major concerns in the literature on the consolidation of democracy in Taiwan (Chang et al. 2004; Chu et al. 2001) and analyzing campaign advertising in terms of its informational contribution is an important exercise. This is particularly so because researchers *have* made the connection between negative advertising and Taiwan's democratic health (e.g. Schafferer 2006, 2009), but they have not done so in terms of the role of information provision developed here.

4. Campaigning in Taiwan

In the past 60 years Taiwan has evolved from a colonial backwater under one-party rule to an exemplar of equal economic development and peaceful democratization (Roy 2003). Political competition in democratic Taiwan is intense. Major parties are well organized and highly motivated. By the standards of many consolidated democracies, the electorate in Taiwan is highly engaged (Rawnsley 2003a), despite declining turnout in recent, non-presidential elections. This state of affairs reflects the newness of Taiwan's democracy (Chu et al. 2001) and the salience of a major socio-political cleavage generally subsumed under the rubric of national identity, discussed below. National elections, where national identity issues come to the fore, have constituted important symbolic events in Taiwan's political development (Copper 1997; Corcuff 2002) and are fiercely contested and often dramatic contests. Election campaigns are impressive and inescapable events in the complex and contested landscape of Taiwan's democracy.

Since the expansion of electoral competition in Taiwan in the 1990s, TV and newspaper advertising have become increasingly prevalent as campaign communication tools. This development has prompted concerns about the preponderance of personality over substance and rampant negativity (Rawnsley 1997, 2000b). In addition to the emergence of 'tabloid journalism' (Batto 2004), 'rampant instrumentalism' (Mattlin 2004a) and 'hyperbolic rhetoric' (Diamond 2003), negative advertising has been perceived as a damaging development for Taiwan's democratic consolidation (e.g. Schafferer 2006). Many Taiwan specialists would appear to agree that 'Taiwan's campaign culture thrives on negativity' (Rawnsley 2003c: 5). In this campaign culture it is apparently usual for candidates to engage in

'a style of personalized negative campaigning that would not be allowed in other consolidated democracies' (*Ibid*: 5). Candidates routinely 'subject each other to the most vicious form of negative campaigning imaginable' (Rawnsley 2004a: 222). As early as the first presidential election in 1996, Rawnsley observed the KMT's 'vicious' print attack on its opponents, the 'blistering attacks' of the New Party's advertising campaign, and the 'extraordinary scale of negative campaigning' (Rawnsley 1997). Despite warnings that, 'in an Oriental society with a strong tradition of deference to authority, the electorate will not accept negative campaigning as readily as some politicians like to think' (Taiwanese politician quoted in *Ibid*: 59), the scale and intensity of negative advertising in subsequent campaigns appear to have increased. By the time of the third presidential election in 2004 for instance, campaign messages included invented stories about crime and social stability, conspiracy theories and alarmist rhetoric about coming war with China and economic collapse (Corcuff 2004). These messages accompanied the seeming character assassination of incumbent President Chen Shui-bian by his opponents. Lien, Soong and their party colleagues likened Chen to dictators and terrorists, questioned his competence, integrity and loyalty, and generally 'painted him as the scum of the nation in language that was without doubt the worst ever found in any election held on the island' (Schafferer 2006: 49).

Not surprisingly, Taiwan specialists have voiced unease about the potential for negative campaigning to exacerbate latent ethnic and socio-political cleavages and undermine public support for democracy (Corcuff 2004; Chu 2005). Currently however, our understanding of campaign advertising in Taiwan is restricted by a lack of empirical research covering multiple campaigns and across different media. In

addition to theory testing and theory development then, a further projected contribution of this study is a systematic analysis of the contours of newspaper and TV campaign advertising across all four presidential campaigns held to date in Taiwan.

Prior to the empirical analysis however, it is necessary to situate campaign communications within the broader context of the political and media environments in Taiwan. This chapter charts the development of the campaign environment in Taiwan through discussion of democratization, media liberalization and changing campaign practices. Any analysis of political competition in Taiwan cannot ignore national identity and so I discuss this issue and its potential effects on campaign communications. Drawing together these major strands of research on Taiwan, the final section discusses the potential effects of Taiwan's broader political culture on the tone and content of campaign advertising.

4.1 The changing campaign environment

As late as 1987, Taiwanese politics was dominated by a single party ruling under Martial Law. Taiwan today has a competitive multi-party political system with free and fair elections held for offices from the village and township level to the Legislature and Presidency.[39] The media environment is diverse and highly developed, with levels of cable TV penetration, Internet usage and newspaper

[39] Fell argues that Taiwan is a multi-party democracy (2005a, 2005c). Indeed by 2005, 116 parties were registered with the Central Election Commission. However candidates for national elections must be endorsed by a minimum number of signatures and pay a significant monetary deposit that is only returned if the party wins more than 5% of the total vote; entry obstacles that discourage minor parties nominating candidates. The KMT and DPP have been the major players in all national elections since democratization and other, temporarily viable, parties have been splinter groups from the KMT (i.e. NP, TSU, PFP).The rapid decline of the PFP following Soong's retirement from politics, the virtual extinction of the New Party and marginalization of the TSU means that there are effectively two dominant parties. See also Table 4.2 below.

readership among the highest in East Asia.[40] Taiwan has a 'vibrant election culture' manifest in high levels of citizen interest and participation (Rawnsley 2003c). This section briefly charts the transition from one-party regime to one of Asia's most liberal democracies through discussion of the effects of political and media liberalization on election campaigning.

4.1.1 Political liberalization

Although restricted elections were held for local offices from the 1950s onwards, comprehensive political competition, including meaningful national elections, was suspended while the KMT government remained technically in a state of war with the Chinese Communists on the mainland. Under Martial Law the political system was pervaded by the party-state (Roy 2003). At the local level, the KMT utilized existing social structures to establish a political machine based on patron-client networks (Bosco 1992). At the city/county level the KMT nurtured competing local factions striving for the privileges of electoral office but with no national political ambitions. At the national level the party successfully demobilized or co-opted every organized sector of society from business to academia and the media. The party filled up political space in society so effectively that at one point, more than 15% of the entire adult population was a member of the party (Copper 1997; Rigger 1999).

Two major developments are generally credited with pushing the KMT to liberalize, first by expanding the scope for electoral competition and eventually lifting Martial Law (Cheng 1989; Cheng and Haggard 1992; Tien 1996). First, rapid economic modernization (the 'miracle' growth experienced during the 1960s and 70s)

[40] As an indication, the cable TV penetration rate in Taiwan in 2002 was 84% of households: much higher than Japan (55%) or Korea (31%): http://www.worldscreen.com/asiapacific.php. Accessed March 2007.

increased the economic and political influence of the numerically superior, but politically marginalized, native Taiwanese.[41] The KMT successfully brought many native Taiwanese into the party, but others lent their support to a nascent democracy movement fuelled by perceived ethnic and social injustices. Second, the shock of diplomatic de-recognition by the US and the loss of the UN China seat to the PRC, forced the KMT to look for alternative sources of legitimacy. Political liberalization was one way to retain both the 'moral support' of the US and release growing tensions domestically. In Chu's formulation, 'elections became a major institution to assimilate emerging economic and social forces into the political system' (1992: 102; similarly Chao and Myers 2000). Seizing on these developments, the *Dangwai* opposition movement (黨外; literally 'outside the party') increased its demands for democratic reform. Activists organized mass rallies, street demonstrations and other confrontations to mobilize latent anti-KMT sentiments.[42] The *Meilidao* incident (美麗島事件) notwithstanding,[43] compromises between the government and *Dangwai* led to the first competitive (though supplementary) Legislative election held in 1980. Despite fears that the election was a conspicuous 'democratic holiday' for US consumption, the KMT continued to expand the scope of electoral offices and to allow greater political space.

Democratization in Taiwan was a gradual, generally peaceful and multi-faceted process extending over a prolonged period (Tien 1996; Tien and Chu 1996).

[41] Both 'mainlanders' and 'native Taiwanese' are ethnic Chinese, but are differentiated by the earlier ancestral settlement and experience of Japanese colonial rule particular to native Taiwanese. Native Taiwanese make up around 70% of the population.

[42] Between 1983 and 1987 the number of social protests increased from 143 to 676. Incidents officially recorded as 'political protests' increased from just 5 cases in 1983 to 106 in 1987 (Chu 1996).

[43] This refers to the arrest of major *Dangwai* figures in 1979. This was followed by a temporary tightening of openings allowed to activists, but did not derail the gradual trend toward liberalization.

It generally followed a cycle of opposition demands for reform, concessions by the KMT followed by further demands (Lin and Chu 2001 and Lin et al. 1996). By 1986, opposition activists were sufficiently organized to form an opposition party, the DPP. Although this action was technically illegal under Martial Law, the DPP was permitted to field candidates in the 1986 Legislative election. Martial Law was officially rescinded a year later, removing the law against organized opposition parties and other restrictions. Following the death of President Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) in 1988 and a brief interregnum, a native Taiwanese, Lee Teng-hui, was selected by the KMT to be President.[44] After a protracted internecine struggle between factions within the KMT that resulted in the formation of the breakaway New Party, Lee consolidated his position and accelerated both the indigenization of the KMT and democratic reform, including bowing to widespread demands for the President to be chosen by direct election (Chu 1992).

Table 4.1: Electoral milestones

- 1980: First competitive national election (supplementary)
- 1986: Organized opposition party competed in Legislative election
- 1991: First non-supplementary election for the National Assembly
- 1992: First non-supplementary election for Legislature
- 1994: Taipei and Kaohsiung Special Municipality Mayoral elections
- 1994: Provincial Governor election.
- 1996: First direct election of the President.
- 2000: Opposition candidate elected President

[44] The original ROC constitution provided for a parliamentary system with a National Assembly, five branches of government and a weak presidency. In the Martial Law era (1947-87) Chiang Kai-Shek, succeeded by his son Chiang Ching-Kuo, derived their power from their positions as Party Chairman and head of the armed forces. Constitutional amendments pushed through by Lee in 1997 strengthened the President's powers vis-a-vis the unicameral Legislature and marginalized the National Assembly (Alagappa 2003; Liao 2005). The nature of Taiwan's political system following the reforms is a matter of debate. Some scholars claim that Taiwan is effectively a presidential system (Alagappa 2003; Kucera 2002) others describe a hybrid semi-presidential system (Liao and Chien 2005).

Since 1996 the President has been chosen by popular vote, with a plurality of votes sufficient for election. Every ROC citizen above the age of 20 regardless of residence is allowed, but not required, to vote. Voters do not require pre-registration, but can only vote in the district of their household registration. Election time in Taiwan is thus full of migrations, with voters returning from overseas and city workers and students returning to their home districts to vote. Presidential elections are not held concurrent with elections for any other office, but the practice in the last two elections has been for referenda to be scheduled concurrently with the presidential vote.[45] Table 4.2 shows the performance of major parties in the four presidential elections. Voter turnout averages around 80%, with a high of 83% for the first election and a low of 76% in the most recent. Seat share in recent Legislative elections is also reported as an indication of the pre-eminence of the KMT and DPP.

Table 4.2: Electoral performance of main political parties in Taiwan

Party	*Formed*	*Presidential vote share (%)*				*Seats in Legislature (%)*			
		1996	*2000*	*2004*	*2008*	*1998*	*2001*	*2004*	*2008*
KMT	1919	54	23.1	49.9*	58.5	55	30	35	72
DPP	1986	21	39.3	50.1	41.3	31	39	40	24
NP	1993	14.9	4	--	--	5	.5	.5	0
PFP	2000	--	--	49.9*	--	--	20	15	1
TSU	2001	--	--	--	--	--	6	5	0

*Joint ticket. Source: Election Study Centre, National Chengchih University.

[45] Although holding referenda concurrent with Presidential elections, particularly in 2004, was clever and probably instrumental (Mattlin 2004a), it should be noted that the practice is not unusual in other democracies, usually for cost-cutting purposes.

4.1.2 Liberalization of the media

During the one-party era the media were a tightly controlled ideological apparatus used by the KMT to depoliticize and demobilize the public sphere (Rawnsley and Rawnsley 2004). Until the addition of a fourth channel (Formosa Television; FTV, 民視) with links to the DPP in 1997, the three terrestrial channels were owned by the government (Taiwan Television; TTV, 台視), the KMT (China Television; CTV, 中視) and the military (Chinese Television Service; CTS, 華視). These outlets performed a strong 'gate-keeping' or 'guard-dog' role (Rawnsley M. 2003; Lee 2000) effectively barring mainstream media access to the opposition.[46] Until 1989 and the establishment of the Liberty Times (自由時報), again with ties to the DPP, the print media landscape was similarly constrained. The newspaper market was dominated by the United Daily News (UDN; 聯合報) and China Times (中國時報), both with very close ties to the KMT (Batto 2004).[47]

The Election and Recall Law (公職人員選舉罷免法), the main piece of legislation pertaining to the regulation of campaign activities, was amended in 1989 allowing political advertisements to be published in newspapers for the first time. The Law was further amended in 1991 to allow televised political advertisements. Airtime on the three terrestrial channels was purchased by the Central Election Committee (CEC, 中央選舉委員會), a regulatory body answerable to the Executive Yuan (Cabinet, 行政院). Time was allocated to parties in proportion to the number

[46] The problem of political ownership of the media did not disappear with liberalization or the advent of cable TV. For discussion of the, still problematic, effects of political media ownership see Chen (2002).

[47] So close in fact, that the owners of both papers were members of the KMT Central Standing Committee (Rawnsley 2004a: 212).

of candidates fielded, up to a maximum of 90 minutes. Rigger describes these early TV ads as 'mostly high-concept infomercials' (1999; 158), although some were reportedly 'attack ads' and subject to censorship by the CEC (Shafferer 2003: 128).

The legalization of cable TV, an essentially economic decision (Chan-Olmstead and Chiu 1999), allowed opposition candidates to sidestep both terrestrial TV gatekeepers and, by facilitating paid campaign advertising, CEC restrictions on the scale of advertising. Operating sporadically since the 1970s, cable had become widespread by the early 1990s, although it was illegal, unregulated and 'essentially run by the mafia' (Chin 2003: 68). The Cable TV Act (有線電視法) legalized and brought regulatory order to the cable market. As a result, cable penetration rates and the number of channels increased dramatically.[48] The increase in the number of channels opened up a vast new public space for political competition. By 2000, ten local and international news channels were available to basic-cable subscribers, providing round the clock political coverage and commentary. Chu (2003) notes that the progression from cable news to other formats was rapid, with the first political call-in show (*2100: Quanmin Kaijiang*, 2100: 全民開講) airing on the cable channel TVBS by 1994. This infotainment format quickly came to dominate primetime and late-night cable news schedules.

For the KMT these developments forced a strategic switch from 'the organizational battle,' i.e. mobilization via machine politics, to more emphasis on the 'propaganda battle' (Fell 2007). Though the less resource-rich DPP could not initially compete in terms of buying airtime, they could exploit the new opportunities by 'creating news' and 'putting on a show.' This shift marked the transformation of

[48] Chan-Olmstead and Chiu report that the percentage of households subscribing to cable increased from 16.1% in 1991 to 79.3% in 1996 (1999: 499).

DPP politicians from 'street demonstrators into talk show hosts' (Chan-Olmstead and Chiu 1999: 502).

The other major effect of the legalization and expansion of cable TV was that it facilitated unrestricted paid advertising. The Election and Recall Law placed no direct restrictions on parties' purchase of airtime on cable channels. The result, predictably enough, was a rapid increase in the number of minutes being bought. By the time of the first presidential election in 1996, the KMT purchased 3294 minutes and the DPP 2028 minutes of airtime during the official 30-day campaign period. Four years later, this had increased to 16927 minutes for the KMT and 9310 minutes for the DPP (Rawnsley and Fell 2004). The growing importance of the cable 'air war' is reflected in the distribution of party campaign budgets. Schafferer reports that the KMT spent 58% and the DPP 79% of their total advertising budget on cable airtime in 2000 (2006: 51).

Media liberalization in Taiwan has led to an essentially free market for election advertising. The lack of cable spending regulations and the lax enforcement of general campaign spending restrictions is responsible for huge increases in campaign expenditure at all levels of office (Rawnsley 2003c). For example, the CEC set spending restrictions at NT$100 million per candidate (£2.5 million) in 2000. But Rawnsley estimates that real spending by the three main candidates exceeded NT$3.6 billion (£90 million), apparently with no adverse consequences (2003c: 10). As Schafferer notes, 'parties and candidates usually find loopholes in the law' (2003: 334).

It is reasonable to say that an 'open environment [ideally suited] to an entrepreneurial approach designed to maximize electoral support' (Norris 2000: 149)

has emerged in Taiwan. This is evident in the size of campaign budgets, the volume of campaign advertising and a marked increase in the professionalization of campaign communications (Fell 2007). Campaigns are not, as yet, run by the semi-autonomous campaign professionals that they are in the US. However there is an expanding role for campaign consultants, advertising agencies and marketing specialists alongside 'in-house' party strategists (Rawnsley 2005). One consequence of these changes is the increasing sophistication and diversity of campaign ads (Schafferer 2009). Parties and candidates have moved away from the rudimentary forms of advertising characteristic of campaigns in the early and mid-90's (Rawnsley and Fell 2004). Their advertising agencies are producing increasingly slick ads with high quality production values and experimenting with various forms and styles. A high profile example of the increasing sophistication of campaign advertising was Chen Shui-bian's 'Son of Taiwan' (台灣之子) ads in 2000. These ads presented an 'intimate portrait of Chen and his rise to power' (Rawnsley 2004a: 215), from humble beginnings in rural Tainan to dissident lawyer and subsequently Mayor of Taipei and presidential candidate. The themes in these beautifully produced ads were carefully chosen to resonate with traditional DPP voters and to link Chen and identification with Taiwan in a subtle way that would not put off voters wary of Chen's past advocacy of Taiwan independence (Cheng 2000).[49] As Rawnsley

[49] Whether a result of China's explicit equation of independence with war or a positive preference for the status quo, the configuration of Taiwanese public opinion has been stable and unequivocally against a declaration of independence for many years (Niou 2004). The marginalization of support for independence had effectively rendered the issue 'electoral poison' by 2000 (Fell 2005a: 122). Chen needed to avoid association with his previous support for the issue, but could not afford to neglect his 'Taiwan' credentials.

recounts, 'the ads presented Chen's celebrity over his party's programme and thus inaugurated a new style of election propaganda in Taiwan' (2004a: 215).[50]

4.2 Campaign practices in Taiwan

Democratization and the associated process of media liberalization have had a significant effect on campaign practices in Taiwan. As a result of these developments and party and candidate responses to them (Rawnsley 2005), campaigning has evolved from a clientelistic mobilization battle supplemented by small-scale traditional practices such as flag-planting and handing out flyers to an enterprise that, at the presidential level, shares several features with the 'post-modern campaigns' witnessed in established democracies like the US. These features include a prominent TV campaign, an expanding role for professional consultants, enormous campaign expenditures, a prolonged if not permanent campaign, and abundant campaign advertising (Rigger 2001; Schafferer 2003). This section charts how campaign practices have changed from the early liberalization era (1980-1992) to the later period of democratization and consolidation (1993-onwards).[51]

4.2.1 Early Liberalization (1980-1992)

Before and during the early stages of liberalization, campaigns were dominated by the KMT's 'ground game,' essentially a political machine for mobilizing votes through patron-client networks (Bosco 1992). Campaign communications were dominated by KMT propaganda, broadly structured by the media and education

[50] Chen Shui-bian is recognized as a pioneer of modern campaign techniques, starting with his campaign for Taipei Mayor in 1994 (Rigger 2001; Chuang 2003).
[51] This demarcation is not meant to be definitive; indeed I will show that there is some continuity in campaign practices between the two periods. However it seems reasonable to follow Rawnsley and Fell (2004) in distinguishing between the pre and post-cable TV eras.

systems and supplemented by traditional practices. These included flag-planting, setting off fire-crackers and making personal contact with voters (*Saojie,* 掃街). Although KMT candidates were heavily favoured to win restricted local contests (against generally small numbers of Independent candidates), electoral competition between rival KMT candidates could be intense. Without alternative policy positions to differentiate KMT candidates, image and personality (in addition to personal networks) were already important by the 1970s (Copper 1997; Schafferer 2006: 32). Independent and KMT candidates alike were restricted under Martial Law from touching on most issues of governance and policy. However they were generally free to criticize their opponents personally. For Independents in particular, mudslinging was an important and relatively safe way of mobilizing anti-KMT sentiments and attacking the party-state.

In lieu of mediated campaign advertising, candidates relied on flyers, posters and trucks equipped with loud-speakers to publicize their message. In 1983 the CEC established policy fora for competing candidates,[52] but since candidates were prohibited from talking about most issues, these events were effectively reduced to personality contests. These campaigns were necessarily candidate centred (Rawnsley and Fell 2004: 7) and the abuse and accusations could get very ugly (Copper 1997). However, the content of campaigns changed in 1986 when the newly formed DPP participated in the Legislative election. Although Martial Law was still officially in effect, DPP candidates pushed the boundaries on many controversial and previously taboo socio-political issues (such as Taiwan independence and more far reaching democratic reforms). During this emergent phase of competition between the two

[52] These have since evolved into televised debates for several offices, including the Presidency.

parties, the KMT and DPP were highly polarized on the issues and ideology. On the DPP side this was manifest in street protests, demonstrations, and other confrontational strategies. However this was more an attempt to gain publicity and the party generally adhered to the democratic process, and gradually increased its support base.[53] Nevertheless, these disruptive activities gained the party a reputation for violence and radicalism which it found hard to shake off (Lin 2005).

Negative campaigning has been a feature of election campaigns since the earliest competitive elections. John F. Copper's (1997) classic accounts of campaigns between 1980 and 1993 read like a litany of dubious behaviour: wild rumour-mongering, uncontrolled mudslinging, physical confrontations between the candidates and their supporters, organized disruption of campaign activities, widespread vote buying and electoral fraud, theatrical stunts and extravagant dirty tricks. The 1989 Legislative campaign featured the murder of a candidate, death threats and riot police stationed at the polls (Copper 1997). To a certain extent negative campaigning reflects the structural conditions of early democratization—limited media openings, off-limit issues etc. However many of these negative practices have continued (modified or modernized) into the period of democratization and consolidation.[54]

4.2.2 Democratization and consolidation (1993-on).

The 'Cable TV era' (Rawnsley and Fell 2004), began in 1993 and by the time of the Gubernatorial and National Assembly election campaigns in 1994, changes were

[53] A major debate between radical and more mainstream factions inside the DPP was whether the party should 'play by the rules' or instead use direct action to combat the KMT (Rigger 2001). They choose the former and the gradual process of democratization continued without major interruption.
[54] The continuation of negative practices under more liberal conditions is perhaps the source of Rawnsley's remark about Taiwan's campaign culture thriving on negativity (2003c: 5)

already evident. Footage of traditional rallies, motorcades and handshaking, alongside candidate sound-bites, appeared in cable TV news reports that would not have previously made it to air. Opposition politicians responded to these openings with outrageous performances in the Legislature or incendiary campaign speeches (Fell 2007). Previously the KMT controlled media would not have broadcast such spectacles, but DPP politicians knew that cable news channels would broadcast their performances to a TV audience.[55] The new TV call-in shows provided similar opportunities (for politicians of all stripes) to gain exposure for their policy stands or notoriety for their personality or pugnacity. The expansion of this new arena for political competition or 'political theatre' (Fell 2007), coincided with a decline in direct action. This decline was most likely due to the continuing progress toward democratization and the DPP's electoral successes. However, Chu (2003) raises the intriguing possibility that political performance, like the orchestrated 'saliva wars' (口水戰) common to political call-in shows, became a surrogate for actual campaign violence.

The DPP had become a viable, mainstream party by the mid-1990s—as shown by Chen's election to Mayor of Taipei (a supposed KMT stronghold) in 1994. That election marked a new type of campaign in Taiwan, led by Chen's team of young and creative consultants. But instead of continuing with the strategy of marrying moderate issue stands with modern campaign methods, Peng Ming-min did the opposite in the first presidential election in 1996. His campaign lacked Chen's creativity and dynamism and his radical Taiwan independence message frightened voters. Peng's disastrous campaign prompted comprehensive changes in the DPP.

[55] For a more general account of the role of the media in popular protest and democratization during this period, see Rawnsley (2000a).

The party downplayed the 'independence clause' in its party manifesto, making it more viable in national elections and ultimately paving the way for Chen to become President in 2000. In terms of campaign practices, the party wholeheartedly embraced 'new media' and innovative marketing strategies. Out went old-style 'tragic-Taiwanese' appeals in favour of slogans and images emphasizing youth, hope and Taiwan's bright future (Rigger 2001).[56] These themes were accentuated in Chen Shui-bian's successful presidential campaign in 2000. With less incentive to innovate, the ruling KMT modernized their campaign communications at a slower speed. Nonetheless, by the time of the presidential campaign in 2000, many features of post-modern campaigning were in evidence from both parties. Huge resources were devoted to commissioning opinion polls, creative image-making, developing campaign websites and the production and dissemination of campaign advertising. Candidates and their colleagues could be routinely seen 'putting on a show' (做秀) at live made-for-TV rallies. The campaign received saturation coverage on the local all-news channels, starting many months in advance of the official start of the campaign. Commentators, politicians and voters dissected every 'event' in the campaign on primetime and late night call-in shows. 'Horse race' stories were fuelled by the regular publication of media opinion polls (many of which were rumoured to be of dubious reliability). Chen's campaign was replete with in-house consultants, image-marketing in the form of 'A-bian' (阿扁) merchandise,[57] and the

[56] Many *Dangwai* activists had harrowing stories of persecution and sacrifice to tell, which resonated with many native Taiwanese who had personal experience of the systematic repression of Taiwanese language and culture. The tragedy (悲情) of being Taiwanese (a theme later adopted by Lee Teng-hui) also references the seeming impossibility of Taiwan being its own master. These themes dominated early opposition campaigns and formed an important part of the DPP repertoire until the mid-1990's.

[57] Chen lent his affectionate nickname to a line of clothing, most famously a hat, and other merchandise. Featuring a cartoon image of Chen merchandise was offered for sale at DPP campaign headquarters known as 'A-bian factories'. By all accounts the 'A-bian Family' brand sparked a

construction of Chen's image as self-made 'son of Taiwan' (Cheng 2000; Rigger 2001). Chen's transformation from dull defence attorney to the embodiment of youthful energy and hope for the future was a triumph for the imagination and execution of his campaign team.

In the democratization era, Taiwanese parties and candidates have employed an increasing number of communication tools. Amongst these, advertising is the most prevalent, contributing to a campaign environment that is, or is almost, 'post modern.' Nonetheless several older practices have proven resilient and adaptable, with 'many traditional electioneering practices [becoming] part of the televised campaign' (Rawnsley and Fell 2004: 1). Examples include live broadcasts of candidates' *Saojie* and *Zaoshi* (造勢) activities,[58] with 'passionate speeches and political stunts taking place in front of huge crowds and aired live on TV' (Schafferer 2006: 52). In national elections, these often resemble 'ideologically charged mass activities' (Mattlin 2004a: 7). Rather than wholesale changes from one era to the next, we see the modification and expansion of practices with very few being dropped altogether. Some 'traditional practices' have receded in popularity, only to resurface later in modified form, like the recent resurgence in street demonstrations.[59] Rawnsley argues that campaign change in Taiwan appears to be 'a process of hybridisation that allows formal institutions and traditional methods to absorb and coexist with new and streamlined techniques of delivering the desired

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fashion craze and complemented the 'Youthful Taiwan: Energetic Government' campaign theme (Chuang 2003; Rigger 2001).

[58] *Saojie* (lit. 'sweep the street') generally refers to small scale events in which candidates make personal contact with voters (greetings, handshaking etc.). *Zaoshi* ('create momentum') refers to larger scale, boisterous and often extravagant events, such as campaign rallies. For perceptive analysis of the role of *Saojie* and *Zaoshi* in Taiwan, see Mattlin (2004a, 2004b).

[59] Other practices may appear to be new, but in fact have precedents in earlier campaigns. For instance, although Schafferer notes that 'another striking feature of Taiwan's *recent* elections is the rise of populist rhetoric' (2006: 49, my italics), such rhetoric has featured in many past campaigns.

message' (Rawnsley 2003b: 779). This is a reasonable argument, although Taiwanese politicians' enthusiastic embrace of Web 2.0 technologies (blogs, video-logs, social networking etc.) suggests the trend is towards newer communication and mobilization methods (Sullivan 2009).

4.3 Issues in Taiwan politics: National identity

The major socio-political cleavage in Taiwan concerns a complex of social and ethnic justice and identity issues. Many of these are related to the KMT's initial status as an émigré regime from the Chinese mainland, which systematically, and sometimes brutally, suppressed the majority native Taiwanese. Although the KMT has long since indigenized and ethnic cleavages have weakened with demographic change and democratization, divisions over national identity remain. Kao claims that, 'identity politics has dictated every election since Martial Law was lifted' (2004: 606). Chu argues that 'deep divisions and worrisome trends threaten Taiwan's fragile democracy' (2005: 43-44). Some of these divisions are especially visible during presidential election campaigns, for example in the 'tendency toward ethnic voting' (Diamond 2003: 75). Several scholarly accounts share the view that deep-seated 'belief conflict' is responsible for the bitterness between the two major parties and manifest in negative campaigning that treats opponents as enemies and potential traitors (Clark 2004). Corcuff explains the 'extreme negativity' of the KMT/PFP campaign in 2004 in terms of a 'psychology of the defeated' (2004: 49), referring to the redistribution of political resources towards the majority native Taiwanese that has occurred as a result of a combination of demographics and democratization. He talks of 'mainlander fantasies about being victimized by Taiwanese' (*Ibid*: 62) and how mainlanders' fears of marginalization by the growing 'Taiwan consciousness'

movement, including the systematic diminution of mainlanders' long cherished ideal of unification with China, were ignited in 2004 by a 'full-scale alarmist rhetoric' (*Ibid*: 59). Chu (2005) similarly notes that the KMT/PFP campaign, with its 'frenetic and excessive mobilization' resembled both a 'national neurosis' and a march towards 'a final showdown,' in which 'the psychological survival of each side's most intense supporters' was at stake. Fang and Feng (2004) argue that national identity divisions and the rising power of the 'Other' have lead to a cycle of 'harm-blame-threaten' in Taiwanese politics. These ingrained identity divisions have potential implications for the tone and content of election campaign advertising in Taiwan and therefore require discussion here.

4.3.1 The domestic dimension

The domestic dimension of national identity has its roots in relations between 'native Taiwanese' (本省人) and 'mainlanders'(外省人).[60] The former category refers to Han Chinese whose ancestors' migration from Fujian Province in southern China preceded colonization by Japan from 1895. The latter are also Han Chinese, but come predominantly from other provinces and mostly arrived on Taiwan following the emergency evacuation of Nationalists between 1948 and 1950. Suspicious of native Taiwanese sympathies to their former colonial masters, the 'liberating' Nationalist army was involved in several incidents of aggression from 1945 onwards. When the KMT and its supporters evacuated en masse to Taiwan between 1947 and 1949 they immediately filled the power vacuum left by the departed Japanese, causing major resentment amongst native Taiwanese who felt that one colonial master had been replaced by another. Relations between the mainlanders and native

[60] For discussion and critique of this nomenclature, see Corcuff (2005).

Taiwanese were deeply scarred by the 'February 28th incident' (二二八事件)—the murder of Taiwanese civilians in 1947.[61] The pursuant 'White Terror' (白色恐怖), in which many native Taiwanese elites were arrested or killed, set the tone for sub-ethnic relations, until, some say, the 1970s or later (Roy 2003).

Conceiving itself as the defender of the authentic Chinese nation and culture (which were under attack from the Communists on the mainland), the KMT suppressed Taiwanese culture and language. The party-state barred Taiwanese from participating in national level politics and public policy and oversaw a strong authoritarian regime that benefitted from aid, trade and military support from the US. Relegated to the margins of society, native Taiwanese, who made up 85% of the population, nevertheless benefited from the 'economic miracle' created in part by the KMT 'developmental state' (Wade 1990). By the 1970s many native Taiwanese were economically empowered and nativist activists began to push for democratization and ethnic justice.

As the demographics of the island have changed, sub-ethnic boundaries have become blurred through the intermarriage and the internalization of a 'Taiwan-centred' identity by many mainlanders (Corcuff 2002). The ethnic make-up of the KMT has diversified—a matter of necessity as older members have died. Native Taiwanese have risen to positions of political power at all levels of society, including the Presidency. However, national identity remains the most salient issue in Taiwanese politics with two distinct blocs coalescing around the unresolved politics of the 'Blue/Green' identity cleavage.[62]

[61] Hsiau argues that this event marks the beginning of a specifically 'Taiwanese history' (2000).
[62] Blue refers to the KMT and its allies, traditionally mainlander and pro-unification. Green refers to the DPP and its allies, traditionally native Taiwanese and anti-unification. It should be noted however

4.3.1 The external dimension

The external dimension of national identity in Taiwan involves unresolved questions of national status, sovereignty and relations with China. The basis of this conflict is often stylized as one of 'independence versus unification,' although the reality is more nuanced than this dichotomy suggests (in terms of public opinion, see Wang and Liu 2004). As a party-state made up of mainland elites, who took it upon themselves to represent and preserve 'authentic' Chinese culture against the Communist revolution on the mainland, the KMT naturally associated with the Chinese motherland rather than the expediently located island of Taiwan. Indeed the KMT government explicitly conceived Taiwan as a 'temporary base for the recovery of the mainland' and treated it as such. Even when the likelihood of achieving this ambition receded, the KMT and its supporters' goal remained unification. Amongst a minority of older generation mainlanders this remains so (Corcuff 2004), but demographic and generational change within the population and the party led to a change in the KMT position coinciding with the democratization process. The 'Temporary Provisions' were lifted in 1991, effectively giving up the ROC's claim to the mainland and marking the start of the transition to Lee Teng-hui's 'two states' position. The indigenized KMT is no longer a pro-unification party, although it is fair to say that it favours closer links with China than the DPP.[63]

In contrast to the KMT, the DPP is often styled as an 'independence party,' particularly in the international media (Sullivan and Lowe 2007: 1), although it

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that there are also geographical and socio-economic features to the divide and the correlation between the green and blue blocs and ethnic identity or preference for independence or unification is weaker than in the past.

[63] By the late 1990s the policy of indigenization begun in the 1970s, in combination with demographic change, had radically altered the ethnic make-up of the KMT. For instance, the proportion of native Taiwanese on the KMT Standing Committee in 1969 was less than 7%. In 1998, this had risen to 50% (Rich 2009: 2).

depends what is meant by independence.[64] Previously taboo—independence supporters were harshly dealt with—the DPP took up the issue of Taiwan independence in the late 1980s, partly to galvanize a weakly institutionalized organization made up of diverse anti-KMT factions. The DPP's position on independence was solidified in 1991 when a plebiscite on independence was written into the party platform. However, with the PRC equation of 'Taiwan independence equals war,'[65] public support for independence (expressed in opinion surveys and at the polls) has never exceeded a minority and following Peng's failed independence-based campaign for the Presidency in 1996, the DPP dropped it as an official goal in 1999.

The crucial development within the DPP was the ideational and rhetorical shift from the pursuit of a chimerical Republic of Taiwan to self determination within the status quo framework of ROC sovereignty.[66] The basic position is similar to Lee Teng-hui's statement that 'the ROC has been a sovereign state since it was founded in 1912 [and] *consequently there is no need to declare independence*.'[67] This 'repackaging of independence' made the DPP more credible at the polls (Fell 2005a: 98) and freed the party to pursue its localization program once in power without escalating tensions in the Strait to the point of military conflict. The DPP's 'discovery' of ROC sovereignty was a significant development, not least because the

[64] If it means 'a formal declaration of independence,' it does not accurately depict the DPP in spirit post-1996 and officially post -1999.
[65] See for instance the text of the PRC's Anti-Secession Law (2005). Article 8 effectively states that the PRC will use 'all means necessary' to prevent Taiwan's 'separation' from the mainland. The law, in English, at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200503/14/eng20050314_176746.html.
[66] The salient document in this regard is the 'Resolution on Taiwan's Future', adopted at the DPP party congress in 1999. It states among other things that 'Taiwan is a sovereign independent country [and] although named the ROC under its current constitution is not subject to the jurisdiction of the PRC.'
[67] Italics added. Extracted from Lee's 'state to state' interview with Deutsche Welle in 1999. Lee caused a stir by referring to China-Taiwan relations as a case of 'special state to state relations.' The PRC sees Taiwan as a province of China, and certainly not a separate sovereign entity.

main thrust of its earlier position was precisely independence *from the ROC,* which was perceived to be inherited from the mainland and inconsistent with Taiwan's historical and political 'specificity.'

The evolution of the DPP's position, and the KMT's under Lee, reflects 'the overall pattern of political movement, whether public opinion or macro political narratives, from one China to a two sovereign states position' (Dittmer 2005: 86). The central feature of this 'overarching consensus' (Schubert 2004) is that the ROC on Taiwan is an independent sovereign entity and that the ROC state must be maintained, e.g. by maintaining diplomatic allies and expanding its role in international society. Although there is evidence that the KMT adopted a more 'pro-China' position after 2004 and has pursued a more pro-active engagement of China since Ma Ying-jeou became President in 2008, more radical moves toward closer ties with China are constrained, in the near-term, by popular support for the status quo (Niou 2004).

4.4 Political culture and campaigning

The discussion in this chapter suggests that the particular trajectory of Taiwan's political development and the continuing salience of national identity have both been influential in structuring political competition. The extent to which these conditions have had an effect on negative campaigning has also been exacerbated by the 'excessive frequency of elections' (DeLisle 2005). Taiwanese are asked to vote frequently and the electoral cycle means that there are elections in most years.[68]

[68] Before the enactment of electoral reforms in 2005, Taiwanese were asked to vote in quadrennial elections for the Presidency, Special Municipality Mayors, Municipal Councillors, County Magistrates, County Councillors, Township Chiefs, Township Councillors and Village Heads, in addition to triennial elections for the Legislature. This has been streamlined by the '3 in 1' merger of county/city/town elections and the extension of parliamentary terms to four years.

DeLisle argues that the frequency of elections has led to 'election overload and polarized and paralyzed politics' (2005: 5). Local elections are scrutinized for implications for forthcoming national elections and national issues are frequently imposed on local contests. The temptation to score cheap political points is great and Chu complains of how 'politicians posture and jockey for short-term electoral advantage' while serious socio-economic problems remain neglected and unresolved (2005: 44). Rawnsley argues that the predominant role of parties and elections in Taiwan's transition to democracy has created a 'culture of electoralism' in which citizens and elites alike believe that democracy is equivalent solely to the right to vote (2003c). This pervasive attitude, Rawnsley continues, means that a 'vicious brand of negative campaigning is tolerated as a characteristic of democracy' (*Ibid*: 5). Short-term winner-takes-all electoralism clearly has implications for campaign advertising, e.g. where local election candidates risk financial ruin if they are not elected (Rigger 1999). In the 2004 presidential campaign, this mentality was visible in 'final showdown' hyperbole (Chu 2005). If these depictions are right, the effects should be visible in campaign advertising. Under these conditions, extremely high levels of negativity would be unsurprising—just as many expert accounts contend. Furthermore, if negativity is tolerated and expected in Taiwan, then it should have a limiting effect on Geer's argument about the need for credibility and the supply of evidence.

A further issue concerning political culture is the effect of Taiwan's 'Confucian heritage.' For some scholars, concerns about negative advertising are magnified by the view that Confucian influences on Taiwan's culture render explicit conflict and disharmony unpalatable. (Chang 2000; Chuang and Miller 2002; Wen et

al. 2004). However the arguments contained in these studies about deference to authority, avoidance of direct conflict etc. simply do not square with contemporary political competition in Taiwan, which, as I have shown in this chapter, can be brutal.[69] A more general complaint about Confucian cultural arguments is that they are so underspecified that Confucianism can be taken to mean almost anything. This ambiguity has tended to lend itself to instrumentalization by change-resistant elites in allegedly Confucian cultures. The most prominent manifestation is the 'Asian values' discourse, which describes the supposed cultural exceptionalism of Islamic-Confucian values. These values supposedly make Asian citizens less receptive to democratic or market principles and have been used to justify continuing authoritarian and protectionist practices in several Asian states (Emmerson 1995; Pye 1985).[70] However, opinion based studies reveal a substantial disconnect between the 'Asian values' discourse espoused by elite power-holders and 'Asian values' at the mass level (Dalton and Shin 2006)—e.g. Asian citizens seem only too willing to embrace democracy given the chance. I do not wish to claim that Taiwanese are unaffected by Confucian or any other cultural influences. And I do not claim that we should ignore political culture. But there is insufficient evidence that these cultural elements play such an important role in influencing political behaviour that they should guide the analysis of campaign advertising (as is the case with the three studies referenced above). Indeed survey research reveals pragmatic and general influences at work in the formation of public attitudes in Taiwan, particularly

[69] Neither are these arguments consistent with Copper's claim that 'in Chinese culture opponents are generally regarded as enemies rather than contestants in the game of politics' (1997: 360).

[70] Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore) and Mahathir Mohammed (Malaysia) are the foremost examples of leaders in the region who argued that liberal democratic ideas imported from the west were incompatible with Asian values and therefore undesirable for the region. Although not explicated as Asian values, elements of the KMT's paternalistic rule would also fit this description.

ethnicity, partisanship and concerns for the distribution of resources (Stockton 2005; Wang and Liu 2004). [71]

[71] See the collection of studies in Paolino and Meernik (2008) for discussion and analysis of the role of culture in Taiwanese politics, particularly the effect on mass attitudes.

5. Methods and Data

Negative advertising has long been characterized (by scholars and popular commentators) as representing the worst excesses of contemporary election campaigns in the US. The counter-argument made by several political scientists is that negative ads provide a comparatively information-rich resource for citizens to base their vote choices on. Empirically there is support for this argument in the context of televised advertising in American presidential campaigns. Assessing whether or not negative advertising is similarly 'information-rich' in campaign advertising in presidential campaigns in Taiwan is the broad objective of the thesis. In the following section I develop the specific research questions and hypotheses to be addressed. I will then define what I mean by negative advertising in this study and set out the process of data collection and analysis.

5.1 Research questions and hypotheses

As noted in chapter 4, several Taiwan specialists have characterized campaign advertising as increasingly and exceptionally negative (e.g. Chang 2000; Rawnsley 1997, 2003c; Schafferer 2003, 2004, 2006). However, to date the empirical basis for these claims is limited by a focus on single campaigns or medium and compounded by incompatible code schemes and undefined notions of what actually constitutes negative advertising (for development of this critique, see Chang 2003). Put another way, existing expert assessments of campaign advertising in Taiwan are not 'calibrated' to a similar anchor between experts, or over-time. To strengthen our understanding, we need systematic and explicit descriptions along a set of measures that can be applied consistently to all elections, parties and media outlets. For

instance, by applying a clear definition of negativity to ads across a number of campaigns. The first research question is thus:

RQ1: How negative is campaign advertising in presidential campaigns in Taiwan?

Another major concern in the Taiwan studies literature is that candidates and parties have systematically sacrificed a focus on the policy issues of importance to voters in favour of personality and image-based appeals (e.g. Chang 2001; Chuang and Miller 2002; Rawnsley 2000b; Schafferer 2009; Wen et al. 2004). Equally, accounts of political competition in Taiwan describe a preoccupation with ideology, particularly national identity related claims (Hsieh 2004; Liu 2004). In doing so, parties are again suspected of neglecting discussion of pressing issues (Chu 2005; Clark 2004; Copper 2003; DeLisle 2005). Moreover, in a society 'mildly divided' (Hsieh 2004) by national identity, Taiwan scholars have argued that over-emphasis of ideological mobilization can have damaging effects on social cohesion (Copper 2003; Corcuff 2004) and public support for democracy (Chu 2005). The second question is therefore:

RQ2: To what extent does advertising emphasize personality, issues or ideology?

Research on Taiwan in the 1990's finds evidence in support of issue ownership theory, i.e. parties emphasizing the issues on which they enjoy advantages and essentially talking past each other (Fell 2005a: 1). However, the same study also finds that parties began to converge in the immediate post-2000 period, i.e. they

started to emphasize similar issues, more in line with spatial theories of electoral competition. What can we learn about political competition in Taiwan by extending the timeframe of analysis into the Chen Shui-bian era (2000-2008)? Has there been an increase in issue convergence in more recent elections, or have parties reverted back to talking past one another? The extent to which parties 'talk to' or 'talk past' each other also has implications for levels of negativity (Damore 2005). If competition between parties occurs within the same issue domains, we can expect higher levels of 'engagement' (i.e. talking to each other). As I discuss in the next section, this would almost certainly result in higher levels of negativity. Thus, if parties are increasingly contesting the same issues we can also expect a higher proportion of negative claims as parties challenge their opponent's claims on the same issues. The third research question is therefore:

RQ3: Which policy issues and ideological themes are most salient in presidential campaign ads?

Geer (2006) argues that negative advertising is of benefit to democratic competition because it provides more relevant information to voters than positive ads. His theoretical argument gives rise to three propositions or hypotheses that will be tested in the Taiwan case.

First, Geer argues that the social norm of 'innocent until proven guilty' creates an asymmetry in the way that candidates present their positive and negative claims (2006: 51).[72] In this view, candidates accept that voters are more apt to take

[72] Geer does not specify whether this is an American social norm or a one that applies equally to all democratic societies. Several Taiwanese political scientists (in correspondence) have questioned

positive claims at face value, whereas criticisms will come under more scrutiny (see also Kahn and Kenney 1999). Furthermore, if a voter does not believe that a criticism is based in 'fact,' they may form a negative opinion of the sponsor of an ad containing such criticism. This kind of 'boomerang effect' (Skaperdas and Grofman 1995) is visible in studies of voters exposed to ads containing claims that were perceived as unfair or unreasonable (Garramone 1984). Since candidates design their ads in order to attract support (or to detract support from their opponents), they do not want to alienate potential voters. In order to avoid provoking a negative reaction, Geer argues that candidates seek evidence to support criticism of opponents (i.e. their negative claims). Geer frames this argument in terms of candidates requiring greater credibility for their negative claims, which they can arrive at by providing evidence. The first hypothesis is therefore:

H1: Negative claims will be more often supported with evidence than positive claims.

Geer argues further that the 'need for credibility' and associated search for evidence in turn affects the content of ads. Geer does not say anything about when candidates will go negative, but when they do, the need for credibility requires them to make specific claims that are amenable to being supported with evidence. The search for evidence to support negative claims leads candidates to the issues, because, in Geer's view, policy (rather than personality or ideology) represents the most abundant source of evidence. This leads to the second hypothesis:

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whether such a norm prevails in Taiwan, where political competitors are often seen as enemies and when the question is national status, as traitors (see also Copper 1997). If this were the case we should expect to see no evidence, or at least no difference in the supply of evidence between positive and negative claims.

H2: A higher proportion of negative claims will focus on the issues than positive claims.

Evidence is a piece of information that can be used to support a claim. For example, employment statistics could be used as the basis for claims that an opponent's policies have led to an increase in unemployment. As in this example, Geer argues that candidates' negative claims are more likely to focus on past performance. In most cases we cannot know if a claim about something is accurate or not until it has actually happened. Evidence is therefore essentially data about something that has already happened. A candidate cannot provide evidence for a claim about something that has not yet been realized. For instance, there is no evidence available for the claim that 'my opponent's economic plans will result in higher unemployment.' On the other hand, there would presumably be ample evidence for the same claim in the past tense: 'my opponent's economic plans resulted in higher unemployment.' For this reason, candidate attacks on the issues primarily look at what has already happened, i.e. an opponent's record on the issues or policy performance. This is the third hypothesis:

H3: A higher proportion of negative issue claims will target policy performance.

These three proportions are derived from Geer's (2006) prominent study of US presidential campaigns.[73] Whether or not these expectations are supported in Taiwan will give an indication of the extent to which Geer's theory can explain campaign behaviour in other democracies.

[73] This study has quickly gained a prominent place in political communication literature. For instance, three years after publication, 'In Defence of Negativity' has already been cited 100 times.

Having established three main hypotheses and three research questions, the major task of this chapter is to set out the methods and data that will allow us to address them. The first step, however, is to define what is meant by negative advertising.

5.2 Defining negative advertising

Such is the frequency with which the term negative advertising is used that it might seem superfluous to define the concept at all. But it is precisely overuse and abuse that makes it essential to define what is meant by the term. Although in popular literature negative advertising is most often associated with 'deception, distraction and dirty politics' (Jamieson 1992), as a concept in political science research, it has generated substantial debate. Richardson for instance, questions the utility of the concept altogether, arguing that negative advertising is a 'suspect category,' an umbrella term that 'vexatiously subsume[s]' several distinguishable attributes (2001: 776). Indeed it is probably accurate to say that, oftentimes, 'observers define negativity as anything they do not like about campaigns' (West 2001: 64). Furthermore it is not only popular commentators who have a tendency to conflate different phenomena—political scientists are equally culpable in failing to recognize that negativity is a 'contestable, complex and multi-dimensional concept' (Richardson 2001: 776). Jamieson et al. make a similar point about the positive/negative dichotomy obscuring 'the important distinction between legitimate and illegitimate attack' (2000: 46). For Jamieson et al. legitimate attacks are synonymous with 'contrast ads,' a third type of ad that reduces reliance on the positive/negative dichotomy (*Ibid*).

However, the legitimate/illegitimate distinction itself necessitates subjective judgements about the harshness of language used (Brooks and Geer 2007), the perceived fairness of an attack (Kahn and Kenney 1999), the presence or absence of accusations (Sigelman and Buell 2003) or scaremongering (Young 2003). Such characterizations can be problematic as a definition of negativity. For instance, how does one judge which claims constitute 'gratuitous asides that suggest a lack of respect for and/or frustration with the opposition' (Mutz and Reeves 2005: 5)? What standard do we use to judge whether messages are 'inflammatory and superfluous' (Brooks and Geer 2007: 5)? Or 'unfairly portray candidates' (Van Heerde 2005: 3)? The difficulty is that calling one's opponent an incompetent liar might easily be considered inflammatory, to indicate a lack of respect or to be unfair. Then again, it might be an accurate depiction of his or her behaviour. In many cases, the answer depends on who you ask. In short, using these criteria to define negativity exceeds an acceptable level of subjectivity.

To avoid making such judgements I use an explicitly directional definition of negativity, where criticism of an opponent constitutes a negative claim. In Geer's formulation 'negativity is any criticism levelled by one candidate against another' (2006: 23; the same definition is used in other recent studies, e.g. Buell and Sigelman 2008, Druckman et al. 2009). This definition has the benefit of being unambiguous and comparatively easy to operationalize. However, in practice, when candidates talk about themselves in their ads they do so in a self-promotional way. Conversely when candidates talk about their opponents it is almost invariably to criticize them.[74] So, although it does not preclude candidates making munificent

[74] In order to test the validity of this statement, I recorded every instance of candidates saying something critical about themselves, or something affirmative about their opponents. Less than half of

statements about their opponents or engaging in self-criticism, defining negativity in this way means that going negative is equivalent to *talking about one's opponent.* This may appear to have an homogenising effect as it does not allow differentiation between different types of negative ad, e.g. issue based attacks, or personal attacks. However, this problem is alleviated in this study by recording not just the tone of a claim but also differentiating by content (e.g. recording whether a negative claim is about issues or traits, on the economy or social welfare, about a policy proposal or policy performance etc.). In this way we can generate highly nuanced data while retaining a clear definition of what constitutes a negative or positive claim.

In several studies (e.g. Kaid and Johnston 2000) the unit of coding is the whole advertisement, which is coded as either negative or positive based on interpretations of the predominant tone. This method is less precise than breaking each ad into separate units or claims. This is because many (if not most) *ads* contain a mix of both positive and negative claims. For this reason, Jamieson et al. (2000) argue that ads should be divided into 'idea units', i.e. phrases, clauses or sentences that carry a claim. An example of the different results that these two methods produce is an advertisement with one positive and three negative messages. A dichotomous coding scheme using the entire ad as the unit to be coded would result in this example ad simply being recorded as negative. This would disregard both the mixed nature of the ad (the one positive claim is discounted) and the magnitude or extent of its negativity (a 'negative ad' could contain a single or a dozen negative claims). Such loss of information can be avoided by *treating the claim as the unit to be coded*. Treating the advertisement as the unit to be coded also contributes to a

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one per cent of total claims fit this description, confirming that candidate advertising is not a medium that lends itself to critical self reflection or munificence towards opponents.

dichotomy that is often misleading, namely whether the advertisement is about issues or image. When using the ad as the unit of coding, it can only be classified as either being on the issues or about image (e.g. Kaid and Johnston 2000). In reality single ads frequently contain claims on the issues as well as on image (and potentially other phenomena, like ideological or strategic claims, which are also disregarded in the issue versus image dichotomy applied to entire ads). Using claims as the unit of coding alleviates the problem of information loss and misleading measurements. In this study therefore, the individual textual or verbal claims (or 'idea units') contained within an advertisement are treated as the unit to be coded. A single claim is operationalised as a word or phrase that contains a claim about the sponsor of the ad, i.e. a positive claim, or about an opponent, i.e. a negative claim.[75]

5.3 Coding framework

This study uses content analysis (Krippendorf 2004; Neuendorf 2002) to generate empirical measures of the content of campaign advertising. The content analysis method considers only manifest content, i.e. content that is present in the text being analyzed. It does not rely on 'reading between the lines' or subjective interpretations of what the text is 'really' (i.e. latently) about (Krippendorff 2004). Content analysis does not attempt to replicate the nuanced readings of in-depth qualitative textual analysis where researchers consider the 'real meaning' of latent content. While this may represent a drawback, the content analysis method does have several advantages. Content analysis can be more easily replicated than a discourse analysis, where subjective interpretations of hidden meanings vary across individual readings.

[75] Naturally, coding single claims does not preclude post hoc comparisons of the content of whole ads, i.e. by aggregating the number of individual claims contained within each ad.

Content analysis allows comparison with other studies using compatible code schemes and frameworks and is appropriate for the analysis of a larger number of cases. This was an important consideration for me, since the objectives of this study necessitate analysis of a comparatively large number of ads (over 500). As a result of this methodological choice, the analysis is restricted to *manifest textual and verbal claims*. Audio-visuals, images, symbols etc. are not coded. This decision follows Geer (2006) and does not limit the major objective of the thesis which is to test predictions derived from Geer in the Taiwan context.[76]

To generate data I carried out a manual content analysis. I coded the entire collection of ads during a six week period— reducing the loss of accuracy incurred by using multiple coders or coding over long periods of time. A Taiwanese research assistant transcribed the TV ads, including accompanying song lyrics, so that no information was missed. The content analysis framework was developed by a) reviewing the Taiwan studies literature, b) borrowing from existing content dictionaries (e.g. Geer 2006) and c) using a pilot study of a sample of ads.[77] The code framework records positive and negative claims in four claim categories labelled 'issues,' 'ideology,' 'traits' and 'strategy.' These four categories enable a more nuanced representation of the content of campaign ads than, for example, the issue/image dichotomy. Geer (2006) uses a separate coding category to record 'values' in US campaign ads, but does not include a measure of ideological claims. This does not seem as justifiable in research on Taiwan. As discussed in the previous

[76] I discuss in the concluding chapter what effect this decision may have on our understanding of campaign advertising, and how this omitted variable can be incorporated into future research.

[77] In the absence of existing content dictionaries in Chinese, and following a pilot that showed the limited compatibility of dictionaries used in western contexts, I followed Fell's (2005a) decision to use a code framework. This follows a hierarchical structure where, for example, 'issues' are divided into broad issue domains that are further divided into specific policy sectors and sub-sectors. Unlike a content dictionary however, individual indicators (i.e. words and phrases) of each policy sector for instance, are not specified.

chapter, ideology is highly salient in Taiwan and national identity fault-lines lie between the two major parties. Taiwan scholars have argued that a surfeit of ideological mobilization can have undesirable consequences, as witnessed by the violence surrounding the 2004 presidential campaign in Taiwan and its aftermath (Chu 2005; Corcuff 2004; Fang and Feng 204).[78] If ideological claims are a feature of campaign advertising in Taiwan it is important to gain a measure of the extent and nature of the phenomenon. Both general values such as prosperity and progress, and ideological themes relating to national identity are recorded in the 'ideology' category.

Issues

Following Fell (2005a), the issue category is divided into 'policy domains;' the economy, governance and management issues, social issues, cross-Strait relations, ethnic or sub-ethnic relations and democratic reform. This six-fold distinction seems to deviate from Fell's nine categories (2005a), but this is mainly due to Fell's decision to code both 'policy issues' and 'ideological issues' (such as 'Taiwan nationalism') as issues, whereas I have subsumed the latter under the label of 'ideology.'[79] This decision was based in part on the observation that one of the most salient issues in Taiwanese politics, national identity, is fought predominantly in the ideological arena rather than in policy terms (Wachman 2002). I specify the ideology category below.

[78] An equally important reason for coding ideological claims is that they can act as an informational shortcut for voters (Tessin 2007).
[79] In spite of differences between our code frameworks, the findings presented in chapter 6 show a high degree of overall consistency with Fell's study.

The six policy domains are disaggregated into specific policy sectors. For instance, the domain 'cross-Strait relations' includes management of relations with China, national security and defence, links with China, efforts at diplomacy, positions on the issue of independence and unification, references to negotiations and relations with the US relevant to Taiwan/China relations (e.g. weapons sales or the Taiwan Relations Act). Issue claims were further separated into general statements, specific proposals and candidate (or party) policy performance. Thus a claim on the issue of corruption could be a general comment ('corruption is a serious ill facing government today'), a specific proposal ('if elected I will establish an anti-corruption task force') or a comment on one's own or one's opponent's record on the issue ('corruption in City Hall doubled since my opponent was elected mayor'). Coding issue claims in this way allows us to identify the focus of positive and negative claims. The six policy domains with example policy sectors are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Issue domains and example policy sectors

Issue category	*Example policy sectors*
Economy	Economic growth, trade, financial markets, regulation and liberalization, investment, taxation, unemployment…
Governance	Corruption, bureaucracy, crime, infrastructure and public works, utilities provision, response to disasters…
Social Issues	Social welfare, health care, education, housing, pensions, provision for the poor, women and children's issues, the environment…
Cross-Strait Relations	Management of relations with China, national security and defence, links with China, diplomacy, independence/ unification, negotiations, relevant US policies…
Ethnic Policy	Policy towards ethnic minorities like the Hakka and Aborigines, ethnic reconciliation…

Democratic Reform	Democratization, constitutional reform, reform of the judiciary, media liberalization…

A first example of the type of claim recorded in the issue category comes from Lien Chan in 2000. Lien combines an attack on Chen's performance as Mayor of Taipei with negative claims about Chen's leadership (a trait claim). Lien observes that as Taipei Mayor, Chen's policies were highly changeable resulting in a string of errors. Lien cites specific examples of how Chen's wavering led to delays and complaints about public infrastructure projects and the loss of taxpayer money. The original text reads as follows:

陳水扁當台北市長, 政策充滿善變反覆, 造成連串錯誤: 陳水扁選前曾保證 14.15 號公園先建後拆, 選後卻不認帳應拆, 造成居民激烈抗議; 停車場政策發了建照卻不准業者興建, 用市民的稅金賠了七千多萬; 保證發四年的敬老津貼, 七個月就跳票停發; 財政白皮書白紙黑字說要「復徵證所稅」, 陳水扁更一日三變, 隔天就全盤否認!

Lien reprised his attacks on Chen's performance, then sitting President, in 2004. Again policy performance and personal attacks were intertwined. One striking newspaper ad, entitled 'the curse of Chen Shui-bian'(阿扁的魔咒), featured a devilish gargoyle. Chen's 'curse' was said to be his incompetence, but was explicated primarily in terms of poor policy performance—negative economic growth, an increase in the suicide rate, rising unemployment, increasing income disparity and the loss of unemployment benefits. These indicators of performance were juxtaposed with comments on the extravagant behaviour of Chen's family.[80]

阿扁真正的魔咒,就是他的無能. 終結阿扁的魔咒! 他的魔咒,已經害了台灣四年。 他的魔咒,讓經濟出現五十年來第一次負成長. 他的魔咒,讓台灣自殺

[80] Following the end of his second term, Chen and other family members were charged with embezzlement and other improprieties for which they received life sentences (subject to appeal).

率亞洲第一. 他的魔咒,讓失業率上升到 5% .他的魔咒,讓貧窮孩童吃不到營養午餐. 但他的家人,晚餐吃的是三千元鐵板燒 . 他的魔咒,讓貧富差距從 4 倍提高到 6.4 倍, 但他的兒子服兵役,可以開二百萬的積架 . 他的魔咒,讓民間投資三年來減少 13500 億，但他的太太,可以變成股市大戶,月入百萬. 他的魔咒,讓政府舉債暴增到 3 兆 4000 億, 但他的財富,卻不斷上漲到幾億. 他的魔咒,讓勞工依然失業 錢都被搶入有錢人的口袋 。 阿扁的魔咒, 就是他在哪裡, 哪裡就輸. 台灣已經輸了四年不能再輸下去!

Taiwanese presidential candidates published some remarkably detailed issue ads, both on policy performance and making proposals. In 2000 Lien set out 'eight big pledges' (連戰的八大承諾). Each of the eight pledges, covering virtually every aspect of public policy, contained several mini-pledges, resulting in over 30 election promises. A short extract below, contains pledges to reduce unemployment to below 4%, increase economic growth to 5%, to achieve fiscal balance within 6 years, to create three metropolitan areas to increase global competitiveness etc.

承諾一: 1) 失業率降到 4%以下; 2) 經濟成長率升到 5%以上 ; 3) 6 年內做到財政收支平衡; 4)堅持財政紀律,杜絕政客濫用政策買票; 5) 促成大台北,大台中,大高雄縣市合併為三大都會區,提高全球化競爭力. 承諾二: 1) 協商兩岸直航,推動「空中安全走廊」； 2) 談判兩岸軍備管制, 要求中共放棄武力犯台; 3) 推動自由貿易港區,促進兩岸經貿交流. 承諾三: 1) 公投入憲,政黨和解,國會席次減為 113 席; 2) 總統及政務官的財產,強制交付信託；3) 推動人格發展權,和平權,環境權,消費者權及勞動三權等新興人權入憲; 4) 成立金融犯罪資訊分析中心,打擊金融犯罪。 承諾四 : 1) 成立「農業部」,老農,老漁津貼照發 ; 2)一年內編足「農產品受進口損害救助基金」1000 億元; 3)農漁民項農漁會信用貸款,利息 2%; 4) 推動 23 元保價收購稻穀,提高漁船加油補貼…

An example from Chen Shui-bian in 2000, combines negative performance claims about the sitting KMT government with Chen's own policy proposals. Chen notes how the 'three big events in life' (人生三大事), i.e. retirement, raising kids and buying a house, became a burden due to the KMT's lack of a comprehensive welfare programme (缺乏健全的福利制度). Chen's '333 welfare plan' (333 安家福利專案) proposes to alleviate these difficulties by raising pensions (to NT$3000 a

month), making health care free for the under-3s and freezing mortgage rates for first time house buyers at 3% (thus '333').

陳水扁 333 安家福利專案. 養老,育兒及購屋是人生三大事. 但是過去的政府缺乏健全的福利制度, 使得人生三大事,變成三大重擔! 國民黨看不到的角落,民進黨關心! 所以阿扁提出 333 安家福利專案, 幫你撫養老人,照顧幼兒,建立家園. 65 歲以上老人年金每月 3000 元,分擔你養老的重擔. 3 歲以下兒童醫療免費,2 歲以下育兒津貼, 5 歲以下幼兒教育券,分擔你育兒的重擔. 首次購屋低利年息 3%,分擔無殼蝸牛的重擔.

Ideology and values

The operational distinction between issues and ideology is that ideological claims contain no reference to specific policy actions. To illustrate the distinction, 'democracy is freedom for the people,' would be coded as an ideological claim, whereas, 'constitutional reform is necessary to improve the working of our democratic institutions,' would be coded as a general statement on the issue of democratic reform. Similarly, 'resuming dialogue with China increases the chance of peace in the Strait,' would be coded as a general issue statement on cross-Straits relations. Conversely, 'we love peace,' would be coded as a value. Although it may implicitly refer to improving relations with China, the claim in itself has no direct policy information.

The major ideological themes in Taiwanese political competition, as identified by literature review, are divided into seven categories as shown in Table 5.2 below. It is clear that several ideological categories are in fact cognate and part of broader discourses. For instance, the internal dimension of national identity discourse in Taiwan includes the themes coded here as 'Taiwan identity,' 'ethnic harmony' and the values of social justice, freedom and rights associated with the

value of 'democracy.' Similarly, the external dimension of national identity discourse includes not only explicit values associated with 'relations with China,' but also 'peace' and 'prestige' (i.e. Taiwan or the ROC's international role and standing). 'Prosperity' is also sometimes framed in terms of Taiwan's relationship with China, e.g. as a reminder that the increased tension caused by independence rhetoric has a negative effect on Taiwan's economic development. Thus while I argue that it is important to disaggregate the component parts of national identity discourse (e.g. by distinguishing between policy and ideological concerns and distinguishing between various ideological claims), it should also be noted that ideological competition in Taiwan is dominated by a very broad and multi-faceted national identity discourse. As a result of the circumstances surrounding the status of the ROC and the context of Taiwan's political history and trajectory, the majority of ideological claims can ultimately be traced back to either the internal or external dimension of national identity discourse. Nonetheless, it is important to avoid the pitfall of portraying national identity discourses and political competition within this domain, as one-dimensional, by failing to distinguish between its component parts (for expansion of this argument see Sullivan and Lowe 2007).

Table 5.2: Ideological themes and values

Parent Category	*Example themes*
Taiwanese Identity	Love and prioritization of Taiwan, protect and build Taiwan, self reliance, survival of Taiwan, virtues of being Taiwanese, 'real' Taiwanese, our land, own master/own way...
Relations with China	Assertions of equality, reference to the legal status quo and status of the ROC, stand up/open up to China…
Peace and Stability	The value of having peace in the Strait and the external and internal conditions for economic growth, stability/chaos, peace/war, danger, hope for the future…
Prosperity and Progress	Appeals to the good life, the well being of future generations, technical and economic progress…
Ethnic Harmony	Harmony between people of different ethnicities and nationalities, unity, togetherness, forgiveness, ethnic diversity…
Democracy	Freedom, human rights, emergence from old regime tyranny, power of the people…
Prestige	How Taiwan/ROC is viewed by the world and the international prestige it deserves, globalization, respect…

Peng Ming-min's campaign in 1996, which was dominated by Taiwan identity appeals, provides some example ideological claims. I operationalize Taiwan identity as signifiers of a distinct collective identity based on common points of identification, references to a distinctive and predominantly hostile 'other' and endorsements of or duties to the identifying collectivity. These features are exemplified by Peng's ads. In the first example, entitled 'Our land, our dream' (咱的江山，咱的夢), Peng asks people to remember the Februray 28th Incident and to reflect on Japanese and KMT 'outside' rule. Peng pledges to return the real Taiwan (an idyll of wild deer roaming in camphor forests) to the Taiwanese people who have suffered so much. Peng asks voters to use their vote to give their unfortunate predecessors, including the

previously exiled Peng, restoration. The ad continues with a plea to 'plant a tree of hope in *our land* and hearts' as a 'witness to forgiveness' and a 'prayer for peace.'

省思 228,支持彭明敏 。曾經,台灣樟樹成林,水鹿成群. 1919 年,總督府落。1945 年以來,它成為國民黨威權統治的象徵. 1996 年,彭明敏謝長廷要將空間歸還給真實的台灣與曾經受盡苦難的台灣住民. 省思 228 請記得用選票還給在事件中受難的前輩們一個公道. 也還給為台灣長期受苦的彭明敏一個公道. 讓我們種希望的樹 在我們的土地, 在自己的心中. 做為亡靈的安魂, 做為復活的願望, 做為寬恕的見證, 最為慈愛的指標, 做為公義的指標, 做為和平的祈禱.

Other ads emphasize that the realization of a Taiwan safe from the fear of attack by China demands Taiwanese to come together and 'help herself.' The way to achieve this is to declare independence (an issue claim). Taiwan must unite to shed the shackles of Greater China (can also be read as 'bullying China'), otherwise, Peng avers, 'our children and grandchildren will never forgive us.' Notwithstanding the questionable logic of Peng's arguments, the exhortations for Taiwanese to 'unite,' 'stand up' and 'self help' in the name of 'our land,' juxtaposed with a hostile China and complicit KMT are classic Taiwan identity themes of the DPP.

台灣人,你要躲一輩子飛彈嗎? 要救台灣靠自己 。台灣,站起來!展開我們的自救運動! 危機,讓台灣看清真正的轉機在於自救 。現在我們不團結自救, 掙脫大中國的枷鎖, 我們的後代子孫將永遠不會原諒我們！曾經,台灣喪失了一次寶貴自救機會. 1964 年,彭明敏發表「台灣自救宣言」明確指出主權獨立的台灣前景, 國民黨昧於自私,使台灣喪失了自救的機會 , 讓台灣人民必須一次又一次地面對來自中國的併吞威脅 . 這次總統大選中,李登輝,林洋港,郝柏村,陳履安的統派主張, 正讓中國可以宣稱台灣是中國的一部分, 使對台任何的攻擊都變成中國的內政問題, 使國際力量對台海安全只能袖手旁觀！最可怕的,是這種統派主張, 讓全體台灣人民在不明確的迷霧中, 茫然失去努力的方向. 使我們的子孫對永無休止的威脅,沒有尊嚴的生活,沒有主權的國家, 以及,沒有未來的未來! 醒來吧!台灣,即將爆炸在鼻尖前的飛彈 ,將炸碎所有苟且偷安的幻想 .自救,才是我們唯一的活路!

In another ad, Peng spells out his platform—'we want independence and oppose unification' (both issue claims). While this ad includes some issue claims (on the cross-Strait relations) it is also full of indicators of Taiwan identity—the courage

of the Taiwanese people, the historical lack of 'our own country,' the need for a 'real Taiwanese President,' the exhortation to Taiwanese to stand up, the desire for respect and references to the February 28th Incident.

要獨立. 反統一. 愛和平. 堅定說出獨立的意志 勇敢踏出台灣的腳步 面對中國的威脅,台灣人更要站起來。勇敢的台灣人民,獨立與民主化新國家是台灣唯一的出路. 一百年來,台灣沒有自己的國家. 直選總統,就是要結束舊體制. 選擇真正的台灣總統, 才能踏出獨立建國的第一步. 統一就是投降. 統一只會帶來另一次二二八的災難. 反統一才能結束國民黨與共產黨的鬥爭與內戰. 建立一個尊嚴的國家. 台灣成為獨立國家, 才能發展與中國的友好關係, 真正的和平要在獨立與民主化的條件下,才能實現。

Many of these themes resurfaced in later campaigns (albeit with the references to independence airbrushed out). These were not restricted to DPP candidates, although Chen Shui-bian's re-election campaign in 2004 particularly emphasized Taiwan identity. Indeed Chen's main slogans revealed the emphasis of the campaign: 'Taiwan First' (台灣第一), 'Yes Taiwan!' (in English), 'Protect Taiwan' (牽手護台灣)[81] and 'Trust Taiwan' (相信台灣). In one memorable newspaper ad, the two characters for Taiwan (i.e. 台灣) were produced in huge oversized print taking up a whole page in the Liberty Times. A small photo of Chen appeared at the bottom of the page—surreally, holding a huge (one assumes, recently caught) fish on his shoulder—delivering the punch-line: 'Taiwan, I do it all for you' (台灣, 打拼就是為了妳!).[82]

[81] This slogan was also the title given to a pre-election rally in which up to 2 million DPP supporters joined hands, forming an unbroken line from the northern tip of Taiwan to the far south. Following similar events in the Baltic States, the hand holding in Taiwan was supposed to symbolize Taiwanese unity and love of peace in protecting Taiwan from Chinese missiles. Protesting the latter was of course the topic of the Defensive referendum held concurrent with the Presidential election and one of Chen's major campaign themes.

[82] Lit. 'endeavour is for you.' My description fails to do justice to an ad that one imagines would resonate with and move traditional DPP supporters: the importance of and love for Taiwan combined with an implied, but genuine, back-story of lifelong dedication and sacrifice for the cause (shared by many Taiwanese).

Traits

The third category, 'traits,' records mentions of the personal characteristics of the candidates. Following Funk (1999), the 'traits' category records positive and negative references to leadership qualities, competence, integrity and compassion. Mentions of a candidate's lineage and associations are also recorded. An important distinction is made between trait claims and a candidate's policy performance. A claim such as 'my opponent is corrupt,' would be coded as a negative trait, whereas 'my opponent has let corruption flourish during his time as mayor,' refers to candidate performance on the issue of corruption. Other traits (such as religiosity, sense of humour etc.) were also recorded, facilitating an estimate of the extent to which trait claims were relevant to the business of governing.

Table 5.3: Traits

Trait	*Examples*
Leadership	Decisiveness, determination, working relationships, vision, respect…
Competence	Experience, intelligence, effectiveness, problem-solving…
Integrity	honesty, propensity to keep or break promises, slippery…
Compassion	humility, fairness, caring, sensitive to others…
Lineage and Associations	connections to *Dangwai* activists, respected former leaders, the 'old regime,' criminals…

Lien Chan's newspaper ads in 2000 provide a good example of contrastive trait claims. One ad features the image of three fruits to make the point that Chen was not ready for the job of President (an unripe apple), Soong was too corrupt (a rotten pear) and Lien was mature and stable (a crisp, delicious apple). Lien claims that he is the candidate with the necessary leadership qualities (領袖氣質),

international experience (國際經驗) and the most complete national leadership team around him (擁有完整國家團隊) to maintain peaceful relations with China.

台灣需要讓人安定,安心的總統. 青澀未熟的. 成熟穩健香脆可口 。 幺 ` 梨仔假蘋果. 要造福子孫還是禍延後代? 要選就選最成熟穩健, 最具領袖氣質, 最能促進兩岸和平, 最願維護台灣主權, 最有國際經驗與擁有完整國家團隊的人來當總統!

Attacks by Lien and Soong in 2004, shows how traits are often combined with performance claims. One ad asks voters to 'change the President to put an end to Chen's arrogance' (換總統: 終結陳水扁的傲慢). The following example uses a common rhetorical strategy: each trait under attack is exemplified with a claim on policy performance. So for instance, Chen's alleged prejudice against the poor is exemplified with a claim about Chen's policy on overseas brides (a practice more common among low income males in Taiwan). A claim about Chen's lack of respect for teachers (he allegedly called them 'bastards'王八蛋) is backed up with a claim about how Chen cancelled preferential savings rates for retired educators.

這個執政不到四年的政黨已經傲慢到可怕的地步! 他歧視窮人, 娶外籍新娘要準備五百萬. 他辱罵所有的老師是「王八蛋」：他要取消老師退休的十八%利息. 他罵公務員是「舊官僚」： 他要消滅農漁會 讓農漁民無處借貸. 他把農會的財產賤賣 一輛賓士車賣 0 元…

Strategy

The final claim category, 'strategy,' is needed in order to pick up an array of claims related to the business of the election and the campaign itself. These claims and appeals are a common feature of campaigning in Taiwan (as the empirical results will show). Moreover it is important to record these claims because they can have an impact on voting behaviour (Niou and Paolino 2003). Strategic appeals include

mobilizing for rallies, encouraging supporters to mobilize friends and family, publicizing campaign events, appealing for votes, encouraging voter turnout, advocating strategic voting, emphasizing the importance of the election, commenting on the state of the race and estimating the chances of winning or losing. Mentions of bad campaign practices are also recorded in this category. In 2000, Lien Chan was so concerned about this that in the final days of the campaign he ran an ad (請小心！選舉最後關頭的十大花招) detailing ten dirty tricks that his opponents might try on.

A common strategic claim is for candidates to mobilize their supporters by noting the closeness of the race. In the example below, Lien and Soong tell their supporters that the difference between winning and losing is just 1% and that this last 24 hours before Election Day is absolutely crucial.[83] They note how effective the DPP is at ensuring the turn out of its supporters and ask for their own supporters to appeal for votes (拉票) whenever and wherever they are. These actions, they are told, will 'decide Taiwan's future' (你的行動決定台灣的未來!).

輸贏關鍵只有 1% 。明天,不能少你這一票! 緊急搶救台灣,黃金 24 小時! 不能輕敵,不能鬆懈! 研究資料顯示,綠軍投票率 90%,高過藍軍的 70% 。綠軍已經用各種方式到處搶票! 把握最後一天,隨時隨地拉票. 你的行動決定台灣的未來!

Evidence

In addition to tone and the focus of claims, citations of 'evidence' were recorded in the relevant categories. I define evidence as a piece of information that is used as a substantive basis for a directly related claim. To count as a piece of evidence, this

[83] They weren't wrong: as it turned out, Chen was re-elected by a mere 0.2% of the vote. Not that they could have envisioned that Chen would be shot on the eve of the election, forcing last-minute campaign rallies to be cancelled and perhaps leading to a small sympathy vote (Anderson 2004; Rawnsley 2004b).

information must be potentially falsifiable. For example, statistics sourced to the Bureau of Education were accurate could be traced and verified. Furthermore, evidence was only counted where it directly supported a claim. Thus TV footage of Soong Chu-yu tending to earthquake victims would count as evidence only for the claim 'Soong tended to September 21st earthquake victims.' But this would not count as evidence if the claim was a more general 'Soong cares about people.' Evidence was operationalized as, a) sourced statistics or official reports, b) direct quotations or visual confirmation of directly related claims as in the Soong example above. Lien and Soong's ads from 2004 provide an example of sourced statistics. In one ad, entitled 'private investment has declined significantly under Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁執政,民間投資大幅衰退), they presented data in a bar chart showing levels of private investment over time. These data were used to support the claims that private investment grew 10% per year under the KMT between 1996 and 2000 (1996-2000 年三年內國民黨執政期間民間投資每年成長 10%) and dropped by 30% under Chen (陳水扁執政後則衰退成 30%). The data were sourced to the Ministry of Economic Affairs (Investment Bureau) (經濟部投資處統計). There are several ways in which direct quotes could be used as evidence. It could be the use of a candidate's own words (either as TV footage or in print) espousing support for a piece of legislation that he subsequently rejected, or a particular issue position later abandoned. For example, in the 2000 campaign, footage of Chen Shui-bian chanting 'Long live Taiwan independence' (台灣獨立萬萬歲) in the early 1990s, was used to support the claim that Chen supported Taiwan independence. Of course we can argue that by 2000 Chen no longer held that position, but the point is that this footage substantiated the claim—Chen did say 'Long live Taiwan independence' and

it directly supported the claim being made. This technique—'using your own words against you'—was mostly used in the context of claims of flip-flopping and broken promises.

The reproduction of quotes from media sources also counted as evidence, *but only where these quotes were statements of 'fact' not opinion.* For example a headline in the China Times stating that 'violent crimes increased by 5% this year' was used as evidence in support of Lien and Soong's claim that 'violent crimes have increased under Chen.' But if quoted media sources were solely statements of opinion they were not counted as evidence. So if Lien and Soong had instead provided a headline from a newspaper that merely said 'Chen Shui-bian is weak on crime,' this would not count as evidence. Visual footage used in TV ads was judged in the same way. Thus footage of Lien holding a new born baby in a maternity ward was insufficient to count as evidence for the claim that 'Lien cares.' By contrast, a Chen ad claiming that 'Nobel Laureate Lee Yuan-che (李遠哲) endorses Chen,' used footage from Lee's endorsement speech to support the claim.[84]

5.4 Selection of campaigns and advertisements

In this study I analyze newspaper and TV advertising across all four presidential campaigns held to date. The data collection reflects a series of decisions and selection criteria—e.g. which elections to cover, which ads to include, which parties etc. These decisions and criteria are discussed in this section.

[84] Note that I did not check the veracity of pieces of information. As I discussed in chapter 3, any evidential benefits are lost if candidates are using false or fake evidence in support of their claims. I argued in chapter 3 that there are powerful disincentives against 'creating' evidence. Moreover, the operationalization of evidence described in this section, reduces the likelihood of false evidence being used.

Elections covered

There have been fully competitive elections in Taiwan since the first non-supplementary Legislative campaign in 1991 (see Table 4.1 in the previous chapter). My analysis however, is limited to presidential campaigns, the first of which took place in 1996. Since I aim to test, in the Taiwanese context, hypotheses derived from studies of American *presidential* campaigns, this study requires a focus on elections for the same kind of office. The Presidency is also the most important political office in Taiwan—with the highest levels of media coverage, campaign spending, election activities and voter turnout. Presidential campaigns also yield a greater number of campaign ads for analysis than any other election would have.

Selection of parties

I collected televised and print advertisements for each of the KMT and DPP candidates across all four presidential campaigns to date. The decision to limit the analysis to the two main parties in Taiwanese politics is based on the electoral dominance of their candidates (see Table 4.2 in chapter 4). The one exception was the presidential election of 2000 where the independent candidate Soong Chu-yu finished second in a three-candidate race.[85]

[85] Soong, previously Governor of Taiwan Province and a long-time KMT heavyweight, left the KMT after failing to secure the Presidential nomination and eventually finished second in a three-horse race. Following the election, Soong established the PFP party, which subsequently became a KMT ally in the legislature and facilitated a KMT-PFP joint ticket for the presidency in 2004. Subsequently however, Soong and his PFP became marginalized by the resurgence of the KMT under Ma Ying-jeou and Soong's last act on the political stage was an ignominious failed run at Taipei mayor in 2006. For their electoral dominance, resilience and the unrivalled influence on political development in Taiwan, the major focus of this thesis is the Presidential campaign advertising of the KMT and DPP.

Type of ads and period covered

The data collection was restricted to *official advertisements paid for by the party or the candidates*. Unofficial ads such as those paid for by support and interest groups, which have proved problematic for candidates' and parties' attempts to stay on message (Rawnsley 2003a), were excluded from the analysis. In order to restrict the sample to official advertisements, where an advertisement could not be identified as being sponsored by either the nominating parties or the candidates themselves it was excluded from the analysis.[86] The timeframe for the data collection was limited to the official campaign period as stipulated by the CEC. This decision follows prior research (e.g. Fell 2005a) and covers the most intense period of the campaign, i.e. the last 28 days.

Selection of TV ads

The TV ad data collection includes all of the unique TV spots that aired during the official campaign period, collected by a commercial media organization in Taiwan.[87] Where possible the data collection was cross-checked with the online campaign resources made available by parties and candidates and in prior research. Where TV ads were identical except for the fact that they were aired in alternative local languages (e.g. Hakka or Aboriginal) only one version (either Mandarin or Taiwanese) was included in the sample. While US researchers have the benefit of the CMAG satellite tracking technology (e.g. as used by the WiscAds project), no such facility exists in Taiwan. Consequently no measure of the number of times a

[86] Although unofficial ads are excluded from the analysis in this study, I calculate from additional data collection that I have done, that the total number of unofficial ads represents around a fifth of official ads. We can say therefore that the official ads that are analyzed in this study constitute the majority of campaign advertising present during Presidential campaigns.
[87] http://www.xkm.com.tw

particular ad was actually aired is available. A primitive way of dealing with this problem is to weight the sample using a measure of spending. In Taiwan media spending figures are available commercially (e.g. showing how much a party spent on broadcasting a particular ad), but these data are incomplete and of marginal use. First, spending data is available for some ads but not others, and second, there is no indication, for TV ads, of where they were broadcast, thus necessitating an unacceptable level of guesswork for weighting calculations.[88] However, for the purpose of making comparisons with Geer's (2006) US study this is not a problem, because Geer's analysis uses a similarly un-weighted sample of unique TV ads.

Table 5.4: Data collection: TV Ads

Year	*Presidential VP Candidates*	*Party*	*Number of Ads*	*Sub-total*
1996	Lee Teng-hui Lien Chan	KMT	14	17
	Peng Ming-min Hsieh Chang-ting	DPP	3	
2000	Lien Chan Hsiao Wan-chang	KMT	37	51
	Chen Shui-bian Lü Hsiu-lien	DPP	14	
2004	Lien Chan Soong Chu-yu	KMT/ PFP	30	46
	Chen Shui-bian Lü Hsiu-lien	DPP	16	
2008	Ma Ying-jeou Hsiao Wan-chang	KMT	26	50
	Hsieh Chang-ting Su Tzeng-chang	DPP	24	
Total			**164**	

[88] Calculating the number of times the whole advertising campaign ran (expenditure/cost of airtime/total length of campaign) does not help unless we have information on how to *differentially* weight each ad. For example, we can calculate that, given estimates of the Chen-Lü TV budget in 2000, the cost of airtime and knowing the length of each ad in the campaign, they could afford to run the entire advertising campaign 63 times. In the absence of relevant information it is impossible to assign individual weights to each ad. For discussion of weighting issues in campaign advertising research see Prior (2001).

Over time, Taiwanese candidates are airing a higher proportion of shorter TV ads, more in line with the '30 second spot' common in US presidential campaigns. The number of long infomercial type ads has fallen election on election. The declining length of TV ads in Taiwan has been accompanied by better production values and increasing diversity. From the allusive (e.g. Chen's 'Son of Taiwan' in 2000), to the comedic (Lien-Soong's 'office disaster' in 2004) to the adoption of youth-cultural forms (Lien-Soong's education 'rap'), the style of TV ads in Taiwan is increasingly varied. Staples of earlier elections, like 'fireside chats' and the parade of 'national symbols' set to music, are much less common in more recent campaigns. Table 5.5 gives an indication of the trends in the length of TV ads over time.

Table 5.5: Length of TV ads

Year	*Under 30 seconds (%)*	*30 seconds (%)*	*Over 30 seconds (%)*	*Total ads (n)*
1996	12	18	70	17
2000	0	43	57	51
2004	7	59	34	46
2008	16	68	16	50

Selection of newspaper ads

In the US the dominance of the TV campaign, the fragmented nature of the print industry and low readership levels, justify the concentration of research on TV advertising. However, Taiwan is different. Although there is a high number of newspapers available island-wide (Rawnsley 2003c: 9), three or four major publications dominate the market. Moreover, the level of newspaper readership in Taiwan is comparatively high (Batto 2004). Newspaper advertising still commands a major slice of parties' campaign budgets even as the TV campaign has taken the majority share (Fell 2005a). Communicating with voters via newspapers is still a

high priority for Taiwanese parties and any study of campaign advertising should recognize this. The collection of newspaper ads is shown in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6: Data Collection: Newspaper Ads

Year	*Presidential VP Candidates*	*Party*	*Number of Ads*	*Sub-total*
1996	Lee Teng-hui Lien Chan	KMT	26	61
	Peng Ming-min Hsieh Chang-ting	DPP	35	
2000	Lien Chan Hsiao Wan-chang	KMT	41	59
	Chen Shui-bian Lü Hsiu-lien	DPP	18	
2004	Lien Chan Soong Chu-yu	KMT/ PFP	64	94
	Chen Shui-bian Lü Hsiu-lien	DPP	30	
2008	Ma Ying-jeou Hsiao Wan-chang	KMT	84	128
	Hsieh Chang-ting Su Tzeng-chang	DPP	44	
Total			**342**	

The newspaper ads were collected from three major national newspapers: the Liberty Times (*Ziyou Shibao*), the China Times (*Zhongguo Shibao*) and the United Daily News (*Lianhebao*). The newspaper sample consists of the total population of official ads published in the main editions of these three newspapers during the official campaign period.[89] The choice of these three newspapers is based on both their combined market share and their approximate span of the ideological spectrum (Batto 2004).

As discussed in chapter 4, until 1989 and the establishment of the Liberty Times, the print media market was dominated by the United Daily News (UDN) and

[89] 'Main edition' refers to the morning, Taipei City edition. Ads were not collected from 'evening editions.'

China Times. Batto reports that the combined market share of UDN and the China Times in 1991 was 57% (2004: 69). By 2002 this had fallen to 29% with Liberty Times increasing from 4% in 1991 to 19% in 2002. Although these publications are not as closely linked to political parties as they once were, their editorial stance can be approximately located on the political spectrum. UDN takes a relatively 'pro-China' position, while the China Times is thought to be more 'centrist' and the Liberty Times espouses a comparatively 'pro-Taiwan' position. With this background in mind, it is useful to look at the distribution of ads across the three newspapers by party. Table 5.7 shows the number of ads published by each party in the three newspapers.

Table 5.7: Number of ads in each newspaper by party

	DPP				KMT			
Year	*UDN*	*China Times*	*Liberty Times*	*Year-Total*	*UDN*	*China Times*	*Liberty Times*	*Year-Total*
1996	4	24	7	35	9	13	4	26
2000	7	2	9	18	25	8	8	41
2004	1	8	21	30	11	30	23	64
2008	12	8	24	44	39	28	17	84
Total	**24**	**42**	**61**	**127**	**84**	**79**	**52**	**215**

On average both parties publish around a third of their ads in The China Times. Both parties publish a majority of ads in the publications with reputations for more 'friendly' ideological orientations. Overall, nearly half of the DPP's 127 ads were published in Liberty Times, and 84 of the KMT's 215 ads in UDN. This varies across campaigns, suggesting the decision to target different readers. For instance, Chen Shui-bian published relatively heavily in UDN in 2000—a campaign which required him to reach out to non-traditional DPP voters (Rigger 2001). By contrast, 21 out of 30 of Chen's newspaper ads during his re-election campaign in 2004 were

published in the Liberty Times. Chen's opponents in 2004 also published more heavily in Liberty Times (23 of 64 ads) than in any other campaign. As I will show in the following chapter, this may reflect the agenda-setting effects of Chen's 'Taiwan identity' based campaign.

6. Assessing campaign advertising in Taiwan

In the previous chapter I formulated three broad research questions about campaigning in Taiwan. First, how negative is campaign advertising in Taiwan? Second, what is the proportional distribution of claims on the issues, personality, ideology and strategy? Third, which issues and ideological themes are most salient in Taiwan? The sections below deal with each of these questions in turn, providing needed empirical data and setting the scene for theory testing in the next chapter. Findings from all four campaigns are presented first, followed by results differentiated by election year, party and where appropriate, candidate status.[90]

6.1 How negative is campaign advertising in Taiwan?

Negativity in campaign advertising has been a concern for Taiwan specialists since the first presidential campaign in 1996. Although one of the main arguments in the thesis is that the tone of campaign advertising may be less important than the information that the ad contains, measuring the scale of negative advertising in Taiwan deserves attention.

As the number of ads has increased (see Tables 5.4 and 5.6 in the previous chapter), the absolute number of negative claims has also increased. In this view, campaign advertising *is* becoming more negative in Taiwan. However, a more nuanced picture of levels of negativity emerges when the number of ads is taken into consideration. One way to this is to calculate the proportion of total claims that are negative.

[90] Candidate status refers to whether a candidate was an incumbent, challenger or quasi incumbent. These distinctions and expectations for each type are explained below.

Over all four campaigns, 2701 out of 7449 claims in newspaper ads were negative (36.3%). As for TV ads, 701 out of 2056 claims were negative (34.1%). The question of whether these levels are *excessively* negative (Schafferer 2006: 49) requires a criterion to be used as a norm, which is seldom, if ever, explicated. This gives such evaluations a highly subjective character. It is possible however, and probably more useful, to compare the findings for Taiwan with those in other contexts. Analyzing TV ads in ten US presidential campaigns Kaid and Johnston (2000) report an average of 40% negativity. Benoit's (1999) analysis of TV ads again over ten US presidential campaigns reveals an average of 37% of all claims to be negative. The best point of reference for this study on Taiwan is Geer's (2006) similarly designed study of TV ads in US presidential campaigns. Over twelve campaigns from 1962 to 2004 Geer reports that an average 32% of total claims were negative (2006: 35). This is marginally lower than what I find for Taiwan. This finding provides further evidence (Holtz-Bacha and Kaid 2006; Sigelman and Shiraev 2002) that negative advertising can represent a common mode of campaign communication in non-US, non-western contexts. Nevertheless, it should not mask the fact that the majority (around two thirds) of claims in Taiwan are positive.

Across elections

Although the absolute number of negative claims increases with each succeeding election, the proportion of total claims that are negative is not increasing monotonically (see Table 6.1 below). Instead, the proportion of negative claims varies, sometimes substantially, from one campaign to another. For instance, the first presidential campaign was anomalously positive, with just 13.3% of newspaper

claims and 3.5% of TV claims being negative. The campaign in 2000 was the most negative, with more than half of newspaper claims being negative.[91] Notwithstanding scholarly accounts that described the 2004 campaign as being outstandingly negative (particularly Schafferer 2006), the proportion of claims that were negative in newspaper and TV advertising were actually lower in 2004 than either 2000 or 2008.

The view that the 2004 campaign was marred by extremely negative advertising (Schafferer 2006) is not supported by these findings. Indeed the data presented here do not support the view that campaign advertising in Taiwan is increasingly negative as reported in various single election studies (Rawnsley 1997, 2003a; Schafferer 2004, 2006). One implication of these findings is that it is not sufficient to rely on expert narratives about the character of campaign advertising in single campaigns. What is claimed to be 'exceptionally' negative by some experts does not appear as exceptional when looked at in a time-comparative perspective.

Table 6.1: Percentage of total claims that are negative by election

Year	*Total Number of claims: Newspaper*	*Proportion Negative (%)*	*Total Number of claims: TV*	*Proportion Negative (%)*
1996	1540	13.3	286	3.5
2000	1301	50.6	526	47.9
2004	2183	34.3	595	33.8
2008	2425	44.9	649	36.7
All	**7449**	**36.3**	**2056**	**34.1**

By party

Table 6.1 above demonstrates that variation in levels of negativity can be substantial across campaigns and media types. Are there also differences between parties? On

[91] This is a result of this campaign featuring three competitive candidates. Both Lien and Chen attacked Soong in addition to attacking each other.

average over four campaigns KMT newspaper ads are more negative (40.6%) than the DPP's (27.6%), although the two parties' TV ads are similarly negative at around one third of all claims. However, these figures tell us less than comparing levels of negativity for each party within the same campaign. For instance, in Chen's re-election campaign in 2004, just 4.8% of claims in DPP newspaper ads were negative, compared to 43.1% of claims in Lien-Soong's newspaper ads. Similarly, in the same campaign the KMT TV ads were, proportionally, almost twice as negative as the DPP's. This reflects a context in which KMT/PFP issues 'utterly failed to define the campaign' (Mattlin 2004a: 17), forcing Lien and Soong to target the DPP. It is possible that these substantial differences, i.e. the contrast between a positive DPP campaign and negative KMT/PFP campaign, are responsible for the various scholarly interpretations of this campaign referred to above.[92] The data for each party in each election are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Negative claims as percentage of total claims by party

Year	*DPP Newspaper %*	*KMT Newspaper %*	*DPP TV %*	*KMT TV (%)*
1996	19	7.3	5.6	3.5
	(796)	(744)	(72)	(214)
2000	28.3	57.1	29.1	56.5
	(293)	(1008)	(165)	(361)
2004	4.8	43.1	24.3	40
	(500)	(1683)	(235)	(360)
2008	47.5	43.3	50.2	27
	(914)	(1511)	(271)	(278)
All	**27.6**	**40.6**	**33**	**34.7**
	(2503)	**(4946)**	**(743)**	**(1213)**

Figures in brackets show parties' total number of claims in that medium

[92] It is also possible that interpretations of campaign *advertising* were influenced by the tenor of other events during the campaign, e.g. the KMT/PFP's '313' demonstration and the shooting of Chen on the final day of campaigning.

By candidate status

Various theories of candidate strategy predict that incumbents are generally less negative than challengers (Damore 2002; Skaperdas and Grofman 1995). As representatives of the status quo, incumbents need to show that the status quo is good and worth sustaining, e.g. by focusing on their own record. Challengers on the other hand need to make a case for change being necessary, e.g. by targeting the incumbent's job performance. Challengers also need to establish what they would do differently given the chance, i.e. by putting forward their own policy proposals. A further type of candidate is the 'quasi incumbent,' i.e. a candidate from the ruling party but not the incumbent standing for re-election. The strategy for quasi incumbents is less clear than for that of incumbents or challengers. Quasi incumbents have to simultaneously set out their own policies and programs while defending the record of an incumbent from the same party. But quasi incumbents may also need to differentiate themselves from the incumbent, while avoiding condemning him or her, which could have a negative effect on the candidate's own chances due to 'guilt by association.'

Exploring differences across elections suggests that the proportion of negative claims does indeed vary according to the type of contest and a candidate's status within that contest. For instance, 'open' contests, where the incumbent President does not run (2000 and 2008) are the most negative. In this type of contest, neither candidate enjoys the agenda setting advantages of incumbency. Subsequently, all candidates have the motivation to attack their opponent in the battle to define the campaign agenda (Damore 2002).[93] Second, in contests where an incumbent

[93] Incumbency advantages include recognition, guaranteed visibility, record of service, power to allocate resources and association with the symbolism of office (Rawnsley 2000b).

President stood for re-election, the challenging candidate ran a much more negative campaign than the incumbent. This is evident in 1996 and 2004; although in different circumstances. In 1996 Lee Teng-hui enjoyed a high level of popularity and support as the incumbent who had overseen Taiwan's rapid progress towards democratization. His early and consistent lead over a radical DPP opponent with no experience of holding public office, was further bolstered by the crisis surrounding the PRC's missile tests. This national security crisis allowed Lee to appear statesmanlike, appeal for support in a time of need for Taiwan and cast even further doubt on the suitability of his opponent's Taiwan independence platform. In short, Lee had no need to engage his opponent and ran an almost entirely positive campaign emphasizing his democratic credentials, competence in running the economy and statesmanlike response to the missile crisis.[94]

In contrast to Lee, incumbent President Chen Shui-bian was not strongly favoured heading into his re-election campaign in 2004. Having been besieged by governance problems (primarily a result of divided government), faced Taiwan's first economic recession and divided the society with his aggressive nation building program, Chen was highly successful in using his incumbency advantages to set the campaign agenda. This was particularly evident in his promotion of the 'defensive referendum' (Clark 2004; Kao 2004; Mattlin 2004a: 17).[95] Chen campaigned heavily

[94] Lee was also helped by certain personal advantages. According to accounts at the time, Lee was 'a photogenic individual, invariably with a smile and a good word. His stature, energy and bearing make him a made for media candidate' (Bellows 1996, cited in Rawnsley 1997: 53).

[95] The 'defensive referendum' was held concurrent with the Presidential election. According to the Referendum Law, a defensive referendum can be instigated by the President in times of imminent threat to national security. It is the only way that the President can circumvent the Legislature and was used by Chen despite the highly questionable premise that the (long-term) build-up of Chinese missiles opposite Taiwan represented an imminent threat. On the machinations behind the Referendum Law (passed a few months before the Presidential election) see Christiansen (2004). On Chen's strategy in calling the referendum, and the KMT's motivation for drawing up and passing the

on his 'Taiwan identity' agenda, forcing his opponents to respond to him. Chen's dominance of the campaign agenda and the failure of KMT issues (particularly on the economy) to gain traction led to the lopsided tone of this race.

6.2 How much do parties emphasize ideology and image or issues?

Taiwan specialists have voiced concerns that substance is being systematically sacrificed for personality in campaign advertising (Rawnsley 1997). A further concern is that parties over-emphasize ideological themes, to the detriment of focusing on the issues (Chu 2005). To assess the empirical basis for these two concerns, this section reports the proportion of claims in each of the four claim categories.

First, it does not appear that substance is being systematically downplayed in favour of image in either media type. Over all four campaigns, 43.6% of the claims made in newspaper ads are on the issues, with just 13.1% on personal traits, about the same level as strategic appeals. Since television arguably lends itself more easily to image construction than newspapers (Wattenburg and Brians 1998), TV ads can be expected to contain a higher proportion of trait claims than in newspaper ads. At 17.9% of total claims, this is the case, but even here issues account for 39% of total claims. The data for both media types indicate that campaign advertising in Taiwan is more issue focused and not as personal as indicated by some scholars. Ads in Taiwan also appear less personality focused than in the US, where Geer (2006: 59) reports that 26% of claims were about personal traits. The relatively high proportion of issue claims is consistent with the one prior study that analyzes a large number of

Referendum Law in the Legislature only to boycott the defensive referendum, see Kao (2004) and Mattlin (2004a).

ads over time, i.e. Fell (2005a). Unlike the majority of other commentators, Fell observed that Taiwanese parties do indeed run 'issue-oriented campaigns' (*Ibid*: 15; Liu 2002).[96]

The suspicion that campaign communications contain a significant ideological content is however supported—around one third of claims in both media were ideological. In the next sub-section though, I will show that the overall distribution of claims masks some trends over time. For instance, parties are focusing less on ideology and more on issues with each election.

By election

In absolute and proportional terms, both newspaper and TV ads are becoming more issue-based and less ideological over time. The proportion of total claims in newspaper ads focusing on policy issues has increased with each election, from a low of 27.5% in 1996 to more than double that figure in the most recent campaign in 2008. The proportional increase in issue content in the TV ads is less marked, although the most recent campaign again featured an exceptionally high proportion of issue claims (61.6%). After the highly ideological first presidential campaign in 1996, ideological claims constituted around a quarter of all claims in subsequent campaigns for both media types. The one exception was the TV ads in 2004, where 43.9% of total claims were ideological, reflecting the predominance of Taiwan identity in that campaign.

Apart from the relatively personal campaign in 2000, trait claims for both media types constitute around 10% of total claims in other campaigns. In 2000, an

[96] It should be noted that several of Fell's (2005a) observations, particularly on the health of party competition in Taiwan's democracy, are more sanguine than other Taiwan specialists. This again suggests that systematic large-scale analyses over time (like Fell's) offer a more balanced view.

'open contest' with three competitive candidates, trait claims made up 25.4% of newspaper claims and 39.4% of TV claims. Analysis of the tone of these trait claims is set out in the next chapter—suffice it to say here that the campaign in 2000 featured a relatively high proportion of both positive and negative trait claims. Acknowledging that this campaign was particularly personal—an exceptional campaign that featured three competitive candidates—casts doubt on the concern that Taiwanese presidential candidates focus too much on personality traits.

The proportion of strategic appeals has also declined. One possible explanation for this decline is that as elections have become a regular (and inescapable) part of Taiwanese life, parties feel less need to remind their supporters to turn out and vote.

Table 6.3: Percentage of claims in each category, by election

	Year	*Issues (%)*	*Ideology (%)*	*Traits (%)*	*Strategy (%)*	*Total number of claims*
Newspaper	1996	27.5	46.6	9.9	16	1540
	2000	33.4	27.6	25.4	13.7	1301
	2004	47.1	27.8	12.2	12.9	2183
	2008	56	24.8	9.2	9.9	2425
	All	**43.6**	**30.7**	**13.1**	**12.7**	**7449**
TV	1996	28	52.4	11.5	8	286
	2000	25.5	27.6	39.4	7.6	526
	2004	31.4	43.9	15.3	9.4	595
	2008	61.6	24	5.7	8.6	649
	All	**39**	**34.6**	**17.9**	**8.5**	**2056**

By party

The figures reported above did not distinguish between parties, but it is likely that the two major parties use different emphases in their advertising. The DPP, for example, has a long standing reputation for being more ideological than the KMT

(Lin 2005). Table 6.4 shows the distribution of claims for the two major parties in each campaign.

Over all four campaigns, both the DPP's TV and newspaper ads are more ideological than the KMT's. Overall, ideology constitutes the largest proportion of claims in DPP ads. However, with a quarter of newspaper claims and a third of TV claims on ideology, a substantial proportion of *KMT claims* are also ideological. With the exception of the campaign in 2000, KMT ads are more issue focused than the DPP's. KMT newspaper ads contain 47.4% of claims on the issues compared with 35.9% for the DPP. Emphasis on personal characteristics in newspaper ads is similar overall, although the KMT TV ads appear to be more personal (20.6%) than the DPP's (13.2%). However, the KMT figure is inflated by the remarkably personal TV ads broadcast during the 2000 campaign, 44.9% of which contained trait claims.

Comparing the proportional distribution of claims in each election gives an indication of party priorities in individual campaigns and trends over time. For instance, both parties' TV and newspaper ads are becoming more issue-focused; both reaching highs in 2008. With the exception of the campaign in 2004, both parties' ads are becoming less ideological over time. This was evident in 2008, where Hsieh Chang-ting ran the least ideological campaign of any DPP candidate to date. This appears to be a consequence of Hsieh's decision to avoid the ideological overload and polarization of the Chen era.[97] It may also reflect Hsieh's response to the exceptionally issue-focused campaign agenda of his KMT opponent, Ma Ying-jeou, whose TV and newspaper ads both contained more than 60% issue claims.

[97] See for instance comments published in the *South China Morning Post*, Jan 19th 2008.

The largest (trendless) variation across campaigns is in the traits category, which suggests that emphasis on personality is more contingent on prevailing contextual conditions. One expectation is that parties and candidates emphasize characteristics when they possess a perceived advantage, and avoid them when the opposite is the case (Hayes 2005). The DPP ads are inconclusive. For instance, Chen may have avoided traits in 2004 because of his opponents' heavy attacks on his character, or simply because his own campaign was dominated by Taiwan identity messages. However the KMT ads seem to confound expectations. For instance, they emphasized the personal characteristics of Lien Chan in 2000—in addition to attacking the traits of his opponents, thus increasing the salience of traits overall—in spite of Lien's lack of obvious trait advantages (Rawnsley 2003c). Lien, a dour career bureaucrat was not endowed with the personality of either the incumbent Lee Teng-hui or that of his opponents.[98] The DPP also pointed out that Lien enjoyed the status of being 'Taiwan's richest politician'—a claim to fame inviting suspicion in a campaign in which KMT corruption was highly salient. In different circumstances in 2008, Ma Ying-jeou, a candidate with a seemingly impressive range of personal qualities, barely mentioned traits.[99] One explanation is that Ma took these advantages for granted, although a more convincing reason is he downplayed trait advantages to avoid the criticism that, though personally attractive, he was an ineffective leader. This theme was a mainstay of a mayoral campaign in 2002, when the DPP's Li Yingyuan (李應元) stood against Ma, who was at the time the incumbent Mayor of Taipei. Li's ads included variations on the theme of 'no matter how handsome you

[98] For perceptive discussion of the KMT's seemingly misguided strategy in 2000, see Rawnsley (2003c).
[99] Among Ma's personal advantages was that he was 'one of the few KMT figures immune to [corruption/integrity related] attacks' (Fell 2005a: 79).

are, you can't be this slapdash' (再這麼帥也不能這麼草率) and emphasized Ma's ineffectiveness in dealing with prostitution, violent crime and natural disasters in Taipei (Niu 2003).

Table 6.4: Distribution of claims in each category, by party

	Party	*Year*	*Total number of claims*	*Issues (%)*	*Ideology (%)*	*Traits (%)*	*Strategy (%)*
Newspaper	DPP	1996	796	20.5	54.8	10.8	13.9
		2000	293	41	32.8	9.6	16.7
		2004	500	38.4	46	2.6	13
		2008	914	46.2	27	17	10
		All	**2503**	**35.9**	**40.2**	**11.3**	**12.7**
	KMT	1996	744	35.1	37.9	8.9	18.1
		2000	1008	31.2	26.1	30	12.8
		2004	1683	49.7	22.3	15.1	12.8
		2008	1511	61.9	23.7	4.6	9.9
		All	**4946**	**47.4**	**25.9**	**14**	**12.7**
TV	DPP	1996	72	13.9	62.5	16.7	6.9
		2000	165	33.3	28.5	27.3	10.9
		2004	235	28.5	51.5	14.5	5.5
		2008	271	58.7	28.8	2.6	10
		All	**743**	**39.2**	**39.2**	**13.2**	**8.5**
	KMT	1996	214	32.7	49.1	9.8	8.4
		2000	361	21.9	27.1	44.9	6.1
		2004	360	33.3	38.9	15.8	11.9
		2008	378	63.8	20.6	7.9	7.7
		All	**1313**	**38.9**	**32.1**	**20.6**	**8.5**

6.3 Which issues are most salient?

Parties in Taiwan do emphasize issues in their campaign advertising. As yet however, I have not indicated which issues appear more frequently. These data are shown in Table 6.5 below. Over all four campaigns there is an even spread of attention across the economy, governance and social issues—around 20% in both newspaper and TV ads. The finding that parties' campaign advertising in Taiwan emphasizes several

issues is again consistent with Fell (2005a). Moreover, the issues that I find to be the most frequently emphasized (the economy, governance and social issues) were also the most salient in Fell's study.

Cross-Strait relations accounted for a relatively low proportion of claims—just 9% in TV ads. The policy aspect of relations with China (including independence) is clearly *not* the dominant issue that some China specialists would have us believe (e.g. Ross 2006). China is still clearly of major relevance in Taiwan, but several factors have contributed to the relatively low level of claims on cross-Strait relations. First, Taiwan independence has disappeared from mainstream political discourse (Friedman 2006; Rigger 2001), as both major parties have come to accept ROC sovereignty (Schubert 2004). Second, many themes related to relations with China have been displaced to the ideological arena, as I will show later. Third, as practical links with China have increased, a greater number of China-related claims have been put forward in related policy sectors, such as the economy, social welfare and education.

The issue of democratic reform accounts for around 10% of issue claims in both newspaper and TV ads. This issue dominated in 1996, but has since declined in salience as Taiwan has consolidated its democracy. It is not surprising that democratic reform was highly salient in 1996, with incumbent Lee Teng-hui promoting his successes as the 'father of democracy' and the DPP's Peng Mingmin calling for more far reaching reforms.

The emphasis on different issues also shows differences from one campaign to another. For instance, governance issues reached a high level of salience in 2000, with the KMT emphasising its strong record on development and the DPP attacking

on corruption and crime. Ethnic policy exceeded a minimal level of salience only in 2004. In that campaign, the need for improved ethnic relations and a clearer policy for minorities was promoted by the KMT in reaction to what it framed as the 'ethnic chauvinism' of the DPP's emphasis on an exclusive Taiwanese identity.

Table 6.5: Percentage of total issue claims in each issue category

	Year	*Economy (%)*	*Governance (%)*	*Social (%)*	*CSR (%)*	*Ethnic (%)*	*Democracy (%)*	*Total (n)*
Newspaper	1996	6.1	10.4	15.6	30.9	3.3	33.7	424
	2000	7.8	41.5	21	28.1	0.9	0.7	434
	2004	19.3	21.1	26	17.4	10.6	5.5	1029
	2008	31.3	20.3	23.3	14.9	1.6	8.5	1358
	All	**21.1**	**22.1**	**22.8**	**19.6**	**4.6**	**9.8**	**3245**
TV	1996	12.5	0	6	2	2.5	58.8	80
	2000	9	51.5	16.4	18.7	0	4.5	134
	2004	23	28.3	35.3	4.3	4.3	4.8	187
	2008	34.3	22.8	28	5.8	3.3	6	400
	All	**25.2**	**26.6**	**25.6**	**9**	**2.9**	**10.7**	**801**

Salience by party

Fell's (2005a) analysis of party campaign materials is generally supportive of issue ownership theory, which predicts that different parties emphasize issues on which they have an advantage and steer clear of other parties' 'owned' issues. He notes for instance that in the 1990's the DPP was concerned with social welfare, democratic reform and KMT corruption. The KMT on the hand emphasized the economy and good governance. These observations are supported by the data presented in Table 6.6 below. For instance, in the earlier two campaigns (the period covered by Fell's analysis) the DPP ads strongly emphasized governance issues (including government corruption), social issues and democratic reform. However Fell also suggests that a process of issue convergence accelerated after 2000, i.e. parties emphasising the

same issues. This view is consistent with spatial theories of political competition, where parties are expected to compete on the same issue or ideological dimensions (Downs 1957). The data for the most recent two campaigns show a degree of issue convergence—using relative emphasis (not party positions or preferences) as the criterion. We can see, for example, greater (and similar levels of) emphasis on the economy and social issues by both parties. The degree of similarity in the overall emphasis of issue domains by both parties and across media types is quite striking, although again there are differences across campaigns.

Table 6.6: Issue salience by party

		Year	*Economy (%)*	*Governance (%)*	*Social (%)*	*CSR (%)*	*Ethnic (%)*	*Democracy (%)*	*Total (n)*
Newspaper	DPP	1996	0	17.2	1.8	42.9	0	38	163
		2000	0.8	60.8	36.7	1.7	0	0	120
		2004	28.1	16.7	25	19.8	0	10.4	192
		2008	32.2	21.5	13.5	18.4	0	14.4	423
		All	**21.3**	**24.9**	**16.9**	**20.9**	**0**	**15.9**	**898**
	KMT	1996	10	6.1	24.1	23.4	5.4	31	261
		2000	10.5	34.1	15	38.2	1.3	0.9	314
		2004	17.3	22.1	26.3	16.8	13	4.4	837
		2008	30.9	19.8	27.8	13.4	2.3	5.8	935
		All	**21**	**21**	**25.1**	**19**	**6.3**	**7.5**	**2347**
TV	DPP	1996	0	0	0	70	0	30	10
		2000	7.3	69	16.4	0	0	7.3	55
		2004	17.9	35.8	32.8	0	9	4.5	67
		2008	42.1	6.3	25.8	8.2	4.4	13.2	159
		All	**28.5**	**24.7**	**24.7**	**6.9**	**4.5**	**10.7**	**291**
	KMT	1996	14.3	0	7.1	12.9	2.9	62.9	70
		2000	10.1	39.2	16.4	31.7	0	2.5	79
		2004	25.8	24.2	36.7	6.7	1.6	5	120
		2008	29	33.6	29.5	4.1	2.5	1.2	241
		All	**23.3**	**27.6**	**26.1**	**10.2**	**2**	**10.8**	**510**

6.5 Which ideological themes are most salient?

Taiwanese election advertising contains a substantial ideological component; on average around one third of claims, rising to more than half in some campaigns. This observation will not surprise students of Taiwanese politics. It is largely accepted in the Taiwan studies literature that national identity is 'the dominant cleavage underpinning Taiwan's party situation' (Hsieh 2004: 479). It would not be a surprise therefore if national identity was found to be the most salient type of ideological claim in presidential campaign ads. That is indeed the case. Although some scholars have claimed that 'Taiwan independence' has dominated the DPP's agenda during the Chen era (e.g. Ross 2006), I argue elsewhere (Sullivan and Lowe, forthcoming) that this argument is based on an undifferentiated notion of 'independence.' This notion fails to take into account the distinction between Taiwan independence (a policy position) and ideological expressions of Taiwan identity. It also ignores the diversity of national identity discourse in Taiwan. A more nuanced understanding of the nature of the various identity themes requires a distinction between the external (e.g. relations with China, sovereignty and national status) and internal (e.g. ethno-cultural identity combined with notions of social justice and democracy) dimensions of identity (Rigger 1999; Sullivan and Lowe 2007). Empirical analysis of more than two thousand of Chen's presidential speeches shows that the internal dimension was much more salient than the external dimension (Lowe and Sullivan 2008). The same study demonstrates that primary audiences (i.e. to whom the speech was delivered) have a robust effect on the emphasis of certain themes in Chen's speeches. For instance, in high profile formal speeches where other international actors can be assumed to represent the de facto audience, Chen's emphasis on sovereignty issues

declined markedly. The opposite was the case in speeches delivered to pro-independence groups overseas. In campaign advertising, where we can assume that the primary audience is domestic Taiwanese voters, what is the balance between the internal and external dimensions of identity discourse? Naturally this is also an important question to address for other candidates and over time.

Table 6.7 reports the salience of each ideological theme as a percentage of all ideological claims. Two ideological themes stand out. Overall, 'Taiwan identity' (the major component of the internal dimension of national identity) accounts for around a third of all ideological claims in both TV and newspaper ads. This is in spite of being a relatively neglected theme in 2000—an election in which Chen Shui-bian sought to steer clear of any possible associations with 'Taiwan independence' and instead emphasized democratic values (Rawnsley 2003b: 776). Democracy is the second theme that stands out—accounting for around one fifth of all ideological claims in both media. This reflects the continuing salience of pro-democracy themes, even though the *issue* of democratic reform has declined in salience. Taiwan specialists have argued that democratic values are often used as a rhetorical or instrumental device, rather than indicating a commitment to the same values (Kao 2004; Mattlin 2004a). The internal dimension of national identity (including expressions of Taiwanese identity and ethnic harmony) is generally more prominent than the external (e.g. relations with China and discussion of sovereignty). This finding is consistent with analysis of presidential speeches in Taiwan between 2000 and 2008 (Lowe and Sullivan, forthcoming) and provides additional support to erroneous claims that Taiwanese political elites are preoccupied with 'Taiwan independence' (e.g. Ross 2006) either as an issue or expressed in ideological terms.

Table 6.7: Distribution of ideological themes

	Year	Taiwan identity (%)	Relations with China (%)	Peace (%)	Prosperity (%)	Ethnic Harmony (%)	Democracy (%)	Prestige (%)	Total claims
Newspaper	1996	28.9	21.8	5.7	4.3	4.2	27.9	7.4	718
	2000	4.7	1.4	32.6	30.9	7.5	20.6	2.2	359
	2004	43.6	1.8	3.8	7.9	17	21.4	4.4	606
	2008	41	9.3	2.7	16.8	5.6	16.9	7.6	602
	All	**32.2**	**10**	**8.6**	**12.7**	**8.5**	**22.1**	**5.9**	**2285**
TV	1996	20.7	15.3	3.3	10.7	12	20	18	150
	2000	12.4	0.7	31	15.2	9.7	23.4	7.6	145
	2004	42.9	1.1	10	11.9	12.3	13.4	8.4	261
	2008	37.2	0.6	0	23.7	9	21.2	8.3	156
	All	**30.8**	**3.9**	**10.7**	**14.9**	**11**	**18.5**	**10.3**	**712**

By party

Fell (2005a) again provides a useful starting point for comparing the ideological emphases of the two parties. Fell found that 'Taiwan nationalism' (which I record as 'Taiwan identity') and 'democracy' were two of the most prominent themes for the DPP in the 1990s and remained so after the party won the Presidency in 2000 (2005a: 129). The findings in Table 6.8 below strongly support these observations—the DPP's ideological agenda is dominated by 'Taiwan identity' and democratic values. For the KMT there is a more even spread of ideological claims, reflecting its more broad-based 'catch-all' orientation (Fell 2005c). This includes traditional KMT themes (e.g. prosperity and ethnic harmony), but also democratic values and Taiwan identity. Indeed it is notable that a comparatively high proportion of claims in the last two campaigns elevates Taiwan identity to one of the KMT's most prominent ideological themes. This is consistent with accounts of the KMT responding to Chen's dominant agenda in 2004 (Clark 2004; Rawnsley 2004b) and, more fundamentally, reflects the establishment of Taiwan identity as a mainstream political theme. As an indication of this development, consider that one of Ma's ads

in 2008 contained the headline message 'Taiwan's future must be decided by Taiwanese citizens' (堅決主張台灣的前途必須由台灣人民自己決 定).[100] That a lifelong KMT official like Ma Ying-Jeou should make a claim in 2008 that echoes what *Dangwai* and the DPP had been saying for many years, supports Fell's argument that 'there is now a consensus among all major parties on stressing Taiwanese identity and love for Taiwan' (2005a: 142).[101]

Table 6.8 ideological themes by party

		Year	*Taiwan identity (%)*	*Relations with China (%)*	*Peace (%)*	*Prosperity and progress (%)*	*Harmony (%)*	*Democracy (%)*	*Prestige (%)*	*Total (n)*
Newspaper	DPP	1996	36.2	11	7.1	0.2	2.5	41.1	1.8	436
		2000	13.5	1	8.3	9.4	0	67.8	0	96
		2004	48.3	4.8	2.6	2.6	3	32.2	6.5	230
		2008	41.4	15.6	0	2.9	9	27.9	3.3	244
		All	**38.1**	**9.7**	**4.5**	**2.3**	**4**	**38.4**	**3.1**	**1006**
	KMT	1996	17.3	38.3	3.5	10.6	6.7	7.4	16	282
		2000	1.5	1.5	41.4	38.8	10.3	3.4	3	263
		2004	40.7	0	4.5	11.2	25.5	14.9	3.2	376
		2008	40.8	4.8	4.6	26.3	3.6	9.5	10.6	358
		All	**27.5**	**10.2**	**11.9**	**21**	**12**	**9.4**	**8.1**	**1279**
TV	DPP	1996	62.2	22.2	4.4	2.2	0	8.8	0	45
		2000	25.5	0	14.9	4.3	14.9	40.4	0	47
		2004	42.1	2.5	17.4	14.9	3.3	17.4	2.5	121
		2008	46.2	1.3	0	7.7	10.3	26.9	7.7	78
		All	**43.6**	**4.8**	**10.3**	**9.3**	**6.5**	**22.3**	**3.1**	**291**
	KMT	1996	2.9	12.4	2.9	14.3	17.1	24.8	25.7	105
		2000	6.1	1	38.8	20.4	7.1	15.3	11.2	98
		2004	43.6	0	3.8	9.3	20	10	13.5	140
		2008	28.2	0	0	39.7	7.7	15.4	8.8	78
		All	**21.9**	**3.3**	**10.9**	**18.8**	**14**	**15.9**	**15.2**	**421**

[100] The same ad contains the line 'the ROC is a sovereign, independent country' (中華民國是個主權獨立的國家). Replacing 'ROC' with 'Taiwan' would make this a radical statement. Instead it is symptomatic of Ma's engagement with Taiwan identity in this campaign—he was comfortable speaking the buzzwords (autonomy, democracy, be our own master etc.) but was careful to emphasize the status quo framework of *ROC* sovereignty.

[101] Of course one could question Ma's sincerity, but the fact that he felt compelled to make this type of claim is revealing.

6.6 Summary of findings

In this chapter I have presented data that allow us to address several key questions about campaign advertising in Taiwan. Before moving on to comparing positive and negative claims, I will summarize some of the main findings set out in this chapter.

First, with regards to levels of negativity, the data do not support some of the more pessimistic interpretations of campaign advertising in Taiwan. Yes, the absolute number of negative claims has increased, but this is a result of an increase in the number of ads that parties are running. Controlling for the number of ads, the proportion of negative claims is around one third of total claims. This is about the same proportion as presidential ads in the US. Rather than a monotonic increase, the proportion of negative claims fluctuates across elections—the 2000 campaign stands out as being particularly negative, but this can be explained by the exceptional circumstances of this election. Seen across time and compared to the US, campaign ads in Taiwan do not appear to be 'exceptionally' negative. This conclusion runs contrary to several expert accounts of single campaigns, and suggests that a systematic study of a large number of ads across elections yields a rather different (and perhaps more balanced) perspective.

Second, concerns that parties in Taiwan are systematically sacrificing substantive policy information in favour of personality appeals are unfounded. On average, presidential campaign ads contain around three times as many claims on the issues as they do on personality traits. On the other hand there is support for the argument that ideology features heavily in Taiwanese presidential campaigns. The good news for Taiwan specialists worried about the potential effects of ideological mobilization is that, with the exception of Chen's re-election campaign in 2004,

campaign ads are becoming more issue-focused and less ideological. Indeed, campaign ads are generally becoming less personal, less strategic and less ideological as presidential candidates increase their emphasis on policy.

Third, the data on the two parties' emphasis on issues and ideological themes largely suggests convergence over time. Differentiation in issue emphasis between parties has declined in later campaigns. In general terms the issues and ideological themes that the two major parties emphasize in their campaign ads fall within a small number of domains. In terms of policy, this includes the economy, governance and social issues. In terms of ideology, Taiwan identity has become the major theme *for both parties*. This finding is consistent with general accounts of Taiwan politics, which note the declining salience of the external dimension of national identity (Friedman 2006; Niou 2004; Rigger 2005). It also supports arguments about the mainstreaming of the domestic dimension of national identity in which 'Taiwan identity' is the primary element (Cabestan 2005; Clark 2004; Schubert 2004; Wang and Liu 2004). Convergence on a small number of issue and ideological dimensions would lead us to expect an increase in levels of negativity. However, since levels of negativity vary by campaign rather than increasing monotonically, it seems that context and strategy have an even larger effect.[102]

Finally, many of the findings presented in this chapter show broad based similarities between media and parties overall across all four campaigns. There do not appear to be systematic differences between media—for instance if candidates decide to attack their opponent or focus on the economy, this decision is reflected in both their newspaper and TV ads. However, there are fluctuations, sometimes quite

[102] This should not be over-interpreted given the small number of campaigns covered here. Making reliable inferences about these longer-term processes requires a larger number of cases (i.e. campaigns)

large, in levels of negativity, issue-focus, issue salience etc. across campaigns and between parties in the same campaign. One interpretation of this finding is that context (and concomitant candidate strategies) has an important influence on the tone and content of campaign advertising. For instance, a candidate's status, as challenger or incumbent, has an obvious impact on the extent to which claims are negative. The state of the economy has an effect on the extent to which incumbents avoid or emphasize this issue. Comparative advantages on an issue affect the tone and focus of claims on these issues. In short, contextual and agent-based factors have an effect on both the tone and content of campaign ads.

7. Comparing positive and negative claims

In this chapter I test, for Taiwan, the expectation that negative ads are comparatively information rich. Three primary propositions derived from Geer's (2006) study of televised advertising in US presidential campaigns are tested. First, negative claims are more frequently supported with evidence *than positive claims*. Second, negative claims are more issue-focused *than positive claims.* Third, negative claims focus more on policy performance *than positive claims*. In the following sections I present data that allow us to assess the accuracy of these propositions.

7.1 Are negative claims more frequently supported with evidence?

The perceived need to provide supporting evidence for negative claims in campaign ads is the crucial element in Geer's (2006) hypothesized connection between negativity and information. The 'need for credibility' drives candidates to search for evidence in support of their attacks, channelling their attacks in the direction of more specific and substantive policy performance claims. Geer also conceives evidence as an indicator of information quality, based on the assumption that evidence renders claims more specific and substantiated than promotional claims. I start by reporting the provision of evidence for all claims, i.e. not yet distinguishing between positive and negative claims. Overall, 295 of the 7449 claims (4%) made in newspaper ads were supported with evidence. This is lower in the case of TV ads, with 59 out of 2056 recorded claims (2.9%) supported with evidence. Table 7.1 below reports the total number of evidenced claims for each media type in each election.[103]

[103] Curiously, Geer does not report the proportion of claims supported with evidence. Instead he reports the proportion of positive and negative *ads*, in each campaign, with at least one claim

It is apparent from Table 7.1 that the provision of evidence has not increased over time. The newspaper ads in 2000 stand out for being comparatively frequently supported with evidence with 92 of 1301 claims (7.2%) supported with evidence. TV ads in the same campaign were also the most frequently supported with evidence (6.5% of claims). If Geer's hypothesized relation between negativity and information is correct, then these different levels of evidence should reflect differences in the overall tone of the campaigns. At the outset, it appears that this may be the case—recall that the ads in 2000 were exceptionally negative.

Table 7.1: Pieces of evidence (not separated by tone)

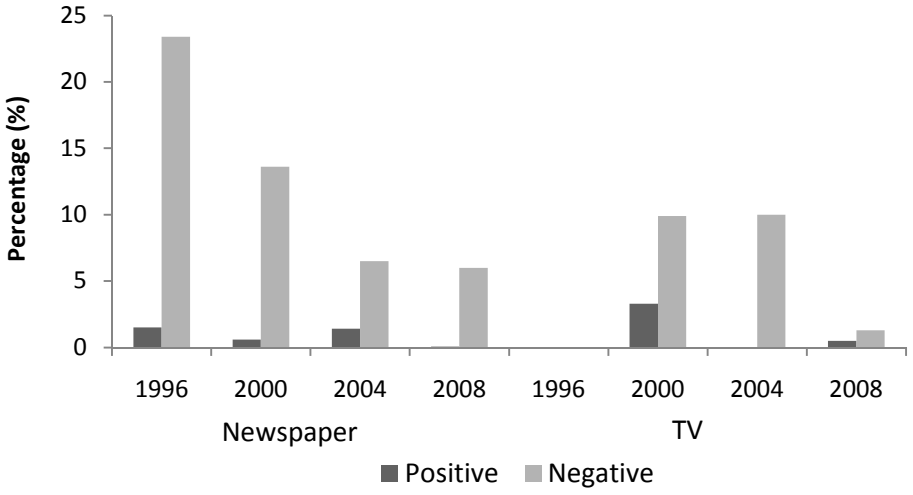
	Year	*Total number of claims*	*Number of claims with evidence*	*Percentage of total claims with evidence (%)*
Newspaper	1996	1540	68	4.4
	2000	1301	92	7.1
	2004	2183	69	3.2
	2008	2425	66	2.7
	All	**7449**	**295**	**4**
TV	1996	286	0	0
	2000	526	34	6.5
	2004	595	20	3.4
	2008	649	5	0.8
	All	**2056**	**59**	**2.9**

The main question of interest is whether or not negative claims are more frequently supported with evidence than positive claims. The short answer is, yes they are. Over all four campaigns, less than one per cent of the 4748 positive claims recorded in the newspaper ads was supported with evidence, compared with nearly ten per cent of the 2701 negative claims. Similarly, just 0.8% of 1355 positive claims in TV ads was supported with evidence, compared with 6.8% of 701 negative claims. Thus,

supported with evidence (2006: 56). This move results in a loss of precision and the different unit of analysis stops direct comparison with Taiwan.

proportionally, negative claims were around *ten times* more frequently supported with evidence than positive claims for both media. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the vast majority of negative claims were not supported with evidence. The proportion of positive and negative claims supported with evidence as a percentage of total positive or negative claims is represented graphically in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Percentage of total claims with evidence



By election

The expectation that negative claims are more often supplied with evidence is generally supported by the data for individual campaigns. For instance, in the campaign of 2000, 0.6% of 642 positive claims in newspaper ads were supported with evidence, compared to 13.6% of 659 negative claims. Not one of the 394 positive claims in the TV ads in 2004 was supported with evidence, while 10% of the 201 negative claims were. Similar differences are visible in 2008. In that campaign the number of positive claims supported with evidence in Ma Ying-jeou and Hsieh Chang-ting's newspaper ads reached a combined one—out of 1337 total

positive claims. This was in spite of both candidates having long and recent records of public service on which to draw for evidence, had they seen fit. In contrast, Hsieh provided evidence for 51 of the 434 negative claims he made in his newspaper ads. In this case the 'need for credibility' argument is buttressed by the observation that the majority of Hsieh's evidenced claims related to attacks on his opponent's character. His opponent, Ma Ying-jeou, enjoyed a strong reputation for integrity and an attractive personal image, which helps to explain why Hsieh felt compelled to supply evidence for his attacks.[104]

The distinct contrast in Hsieh's ads fits Geer's (2006) portrayal of candidates being more inclined to find evidence for their attacks, while taking a more relaxed approach to providing evidence for their promotional claims. However, it is not always the case that positive claims are more credible and, therefore, according to Geer, require less evidence to make them credible. Consider Chen Shui-bian in 2004. Not one of the negative claims in his newspaper ads was supported with evidence, but 15 positive claims were. These pieces of evidence were all in support of promotional claims made by Chen about policy performance in his first term, particularly on the economy and social issues. Although contrary to the argument that negative claims are more frequently supplied with evidence, this finding supports the more general idea that candidates seek credibility by providing evidence. That Chen would seek additional credibility for his claims to have governed well is understandable when one considers the economic and governance problems experienced during his tenure—and the volume and intensity of attacks by his opponents on this theme. If this reading is reasonable, it suggests that Geer's

[104] The majority of these attacks targeted Ma's leadership, patriotism and integrity.

argument that negative claims inherently require more evidence than positive claims to make them credible is too simplistic. Instead it may be that the 'need for credibility,' and therefore the supply of evidence, is contingent on contextual and strategic conditions and is not solely determined by the decision to promote or attack.

Table 7.2: Proportion of claims with evidence, by election

		Newspaper		*TV*	
Party	*Year*	+ *(%)*	- *(%)*	+ *(%)*	- *(%)*
DPP	1996	1.2 (645)	5.3 (151)	0 (68)	0 (4)
	2000	0 (210)	3.6 (83)	4.3 (117)	16.7 (48)
	2004	2.9 (476)	0 (24)	0 (178)	15.8 (57)
	2008	0 (480)	11.8 (434)	0 (135)	2.2 (136)
KMT	1996	1.7 (690)	74.1 (54)	0 (208)	0 (6)
	2000	0.9 (432)	14.8 (576)	2.5 (157)	8.3 (204)
	2004	0.6 (958)	6.8 (735)	0 (216)	7.6 (144)
	2008	0.1 (857)	2.1 (654)	0.7 (276)	0 (102)

Number of claims in brackets. '+' denotes positive and '-' negative.

By claim category

Geer (2006) argues that negative claims should be more issue-focused and more frequently target policy performance—because of the availability of evidence. These two expectations are addressed in detail in sections 7.3 and 7.4, but if Geer's argument is correct, we should expect claims in the issue category to be more frequently supplied with evidence than, for example, ideological claims. The

proportion of evidenced claims divided by claim category is shown in Table 7.3 below.

There are large differences in the supply of evidence between the four claim categories, although in each case the level of evidence is higher for negative claims. In terms of absolute numbers, claims on the issues are the most often supported with evidence. Proportionally, issue claims are more often supported than traits or ideology. Ideological claims are least often supported with evidence and this is the only claim category where the tone of a claim does not have a major effect, i.e. positive and negative claims both contain equally low levels of evidence. Tone has a substantial effect on the provision of evidence in the other three categories. For instance, in the newspaper ads 1% of positive issue claims in newspaper ads are supported with evidence, compared with 10% of negative issue claims. Just 0.4% of positive trait claims, in which candidates promote their own personal qualities, supplied evidence. By comparison, 7% of trait attacks supplied evidence. This result is as expected, although the vast majority of personal attacks are not supported with evidence and do not, therefore, benefit from the evidential benefits discussed in chapter 4. This is unlikely to assuage the concerns of Taiwan specialists who note the propensity for Taiwanese candidates to issue personal insults or engage in hearsay (Rawnsley 1997; Schafferer 2004; 2006).

Table 7.3: Percentage claims in each category with evidence

Media	*Tone**	*Issue (%)*	*Ideology (%)*	*Trait (%)*	*Strategy (%)*	*Total claims (n)*
Newspaper	+	1	0.9	0.40	0.50	4748
	-	10	1.4	7	14	2701
TV	+	2	0.3	2	0	1355
	-	7	0.4	7	8	701

7.3 Are negative claims comparatively issue-focused?

If Geer (2006) and others (e.g. Franz et al. 2007) are right, candidates and parties are more likely to make substantive issues the basis of their attack advertising. Geer's argument is that negative claims require higher levels of specificity and evidence to make them credible and that substantive policy issues offer the richest source for this type of content. This argument is supported by the data in Table 7.3 above—issue claims are supported with evidence more often than other types of claim. I now turn to the comparative distribution of claims, first reporting the proportion of negative and positive claims in each of the four claim categories as a percentage of the total number of negative of positive claims (see Figure 7.2 (newspaper) and 7.3 (TV) below).

In the newspaper ads a total of 4748 positive claims and 2701 negative claims were recorded over all four campaigns. Ideology constituted the highest proportion (39.1%) of positive claims, followed by claims on the issues (35.9%). Trait claims made up around 10% of total positive claims—less than half the proportion of personal *attacks*. As I have already pointed out, Taiwanese candidates are not sacrificing substance in favour of image. Instead their promotional claims strongly emphasize ideological themes. The highest proportion of negative claims was on the issues—accounting for more than half of all negative claims in newspaper ads (57.1%). Also as expected was the relatively small proportion of negative claims on ideology (15.9%). An almost identical picture emerges from the TV ads. Regardless of media type and despite differences in the way that the

newspaper and TV ad samples were collected,[105] the results are quite clear. The majority of negative claims are on the issues, while positive claims are predominantly made up of ideology followed by the issues.

Figure 7.2: Distribution of claims by tone (newspaper)

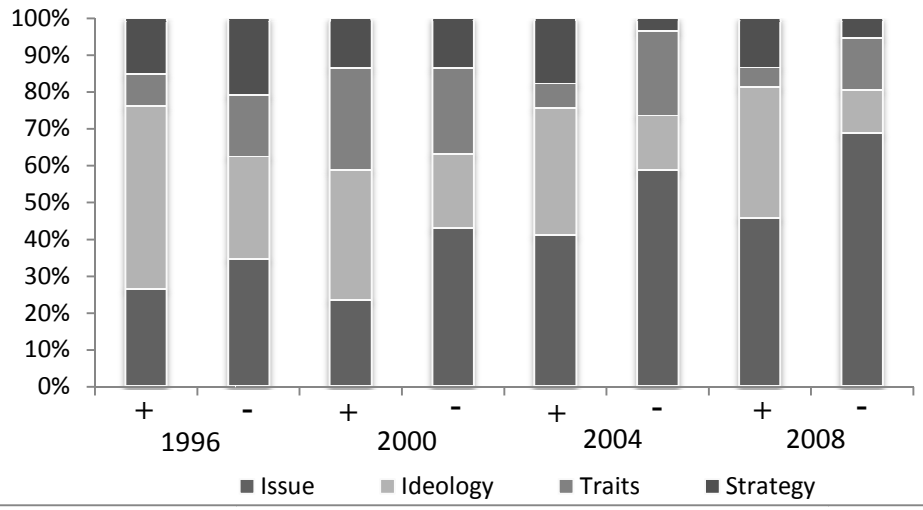
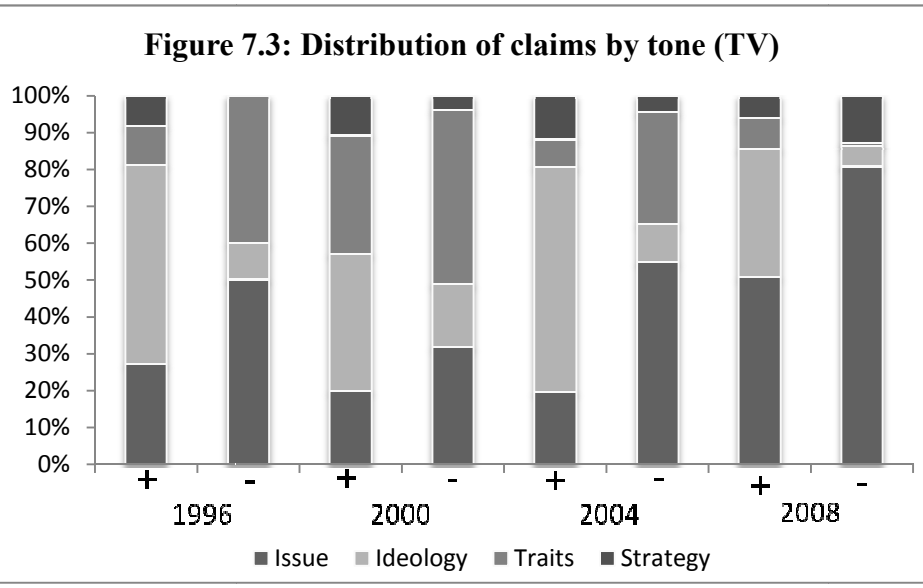


Figure 7.3: Distribution of claims by tone (TV)



[105] I.e. the newspaper collection represents the total population of official ads published during the official campaign period and therefore includes duplicates. The TV ad collection on the other hand represents the unique ads that ran during the official campaign, but does not give an indication of the number of times each ad was aired.

By election

Over time, candidates are promoting themselves *and* attacking their opponents more on the issues with each campaign. From one third of negative claims attacking on the issues in newspaper ads in 1996 to more than two thirds of negative claims in 2008, candidates in each successive election have increasingly targeted their opponents on the issues. The trend towards more issue-based advertising is less clear in the TV ads. Around half of positive claims in 2008 were on the issues, but considering the much lower level of positive issue claims in preceding campaigns, it is unclear that this represents a new resting level. I offer an explanation below for the exceptional issue-focused ads in 2008.

As noted in the previous chapter, campaign ads are becoming less ideological. In the newspaper ads both the promotion of candidates' own ideology (49.5%) and attacking opponents' ideology (27.8%) were substantially higher in the first presidential campaign than any subsequent one. Positive ideological claims have stabilized at around one third of total positive claims in the subsequent three campaigns, and thus remain a salient feature of Taiwanese presidential elections. The proportion of negative ideological claims has declined with each campaign, reaching a low of 11.8% in 2008. It is tempting to infer that ideological attacks have declined as a result of the emergence of an 'overarching consensus' on Taiwan's national status (Schubert 2004), although this interpretation is contrary to other commentaries on the ideological polarization induced by Chen Shui-bian's aggressive 'nation building' (Corcuff 2004; Lynch 2004). More pertinent to the purpose of this chapter, is that the decline in the proportion of negative claims on ideology is expected.

Further differences in the distribution of claims across campaigns can largely be explained by the context of each race. For instance, in the newspaper ads in 2000 an exceptionally high 27.6% of positive claims promoted the sponsor's characteristics. Much of this was down to the concerted, although some say misguided (Rawnsley 2003b), attempt to develop the image of the dour KMT candidate Lien Chan, in the face of charismatic (Soong Chu-yu) and dynamic (Chen Shui-bian) opponents. Personal attacks constituted around a quarter of negative claims in the same campaign, with Soong's integrity bearing the brunt of attacks from both of his opponents. Consistent with accounts of the 2004 election (Schafferer 2004; 2006) trait attacks made up nearly a quarter of negative claims in newspaper ads in that campaign. That these personal attacks were almost exclusively directed against incumbent Chen Shui-bian, supports Schafferer's claim that the KMT/PFP had no other strategy than to discredit Chen's character (2006: 49).

As noted above, the campaign in 2008 stands out as being exceptionally issue-focused—and the least ideological of all four campaigns. Rather than accepting Hsieh and Ma's rhetoric at the outset of the campaign that they would be respectful to one another and emphasize substance,[106] the context of the election offers a better explanation for the nature of this campaign. Following the corruption scandals and strongly ideological tenor of Chen's second term, Ma's 'back to basics' message successfully established the economy as the most salient campaign issue. This was an issue on which the KMT enjoyed a strong reputation (having overseen Taiwan's 'economic miracle') and provided a comparative advantage over the DPP. In particular, Ma sought to emphasize that Chen had done badly on the economy in his

[106] An editorial in the *China Post* (Feb 3rd 2008), entitled 'where's the positive approach?' similarly questions this premise.

8 years. The traditional DPP response to the KMT's claims to superiority on the economy had been to raise the issue of social welfare and to a greater extent, to fall back on ideological appeals to 'Taiwan identity' (Fell 2005a; Rigger 2001). However, this option was less attractive to Hsieh, given the general malaise elicited by Taiwanese citizens with Chen's, ultimately divisive, 'nation building project' (Dittmer 2004; Lynch 2004). A campaign built on Taiwan identity, like Chen's re-election campaign in 2004, would probably not have served Hsieh as well. Seeking to distance himself from the increasingly unpopular and discredited Chen, and facing an opponent with more attractive personal characteristics, Hsieh had no choice but to focus on the issues. However, the issue space was already occupied by Ma's strong and popular 'fix the economy and improve relations with China' message. Relatively moderate (for a DPP candidate) with no strong policy agenda of his own, Hsieh was forced to attack Ma's issues, particularly his 'common Chinese economic market' proposal.[107] As noted above, Hsieh's other campaign strategy, i.e. to attack Ma's integrity,[108] was responsible for many specific and evidenced claims. It is also noteworthy that these personal attacks on Ma featured in Hsieh's newspaper ads but not in his TV ads. This would not surprise exponents of Confucian cultural arguments about campaign ads in Taiwan (Chuang and Miller 2002; Wen et al. 2004). Yet there is no evidence that Taiwanese candidates are averse to attacking their opponents' character via TV, a medium that brings (allegedly unpalatable)

[107] An indication of Hsieh's predicament, was the sudden introduction of a pledge to bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games in Taiwan. This unrealistic and out-of-the-blue proposition was based on the premise that Beijing had held the Games in 2008 and so Taiwan should also have the opportunity.

[108] By implication, Hsieh's attacks on Ma's ambiguous visa status in the US were an attack on Ma's patriotism. Ma, was born in Hong Kong and as a candidate for Mayor of Taipei in 1998 was attacked by incumbent Mayor Chen Shui-bian for not being 'genuinely Taiwanese.' Part of Ma's defence was the 'new Taiwanese' gambit supplied by Lee Teng-hui (i.e. we are all Taiwanese regardless of where we were born). In the 2008 Presidential campaign Ma's support was apparently little affected by Hsieh's personal attacks.

conflict into the (allegedly sacred) home. Indeed Lien Chan's TV ads featured multiple attacks on Soong's integrity and Chen's lack of 'steadiness' in 2000 and Chen's integrity, leadership and competence in 2004.

7.4 Do negative issue claims focus on performance?

The major normative argument that underpins Geer's (2006) 'defence of negativity' is that negative advertising contributes to holding office holders accountable by focusing on policy performance and providing information on incumbents' (and other candidates') records on the job. Geer argues that negative claims focus on policy performance because of the rich seam of evidence available for credible attacks. Recall that issue claims were coded as being general statements on an issue, claims about performance (retrospective) and policy proposals (prospective). Table 7.4 first sets out this breakdown of issue claims for each media type, but as yet does not separate claims by tone. This provides a useful overview of the focus of issue claims in Taiwan over time. It is apparent that Taiwanese presidential candidates devote a large proportion of their issue claims to performance—over half of their issue claims in both media. However, with each campaign, performance claims are declining as a proportion of issue claims in newspaper ads. At the same time, policy proposals are increasing. The opposite is the case in the TV ads, where performance claims increased from 44% in 1996 to 85.6% in 2004. This fell off dramatically in 2008 (to just 27.2%)—an 'open contest' in which both candidates made a greater proportion of proposals.

Table 7.4: Breakdown of issue claims (not separated by tone)

	Year	*General (%)*	*Performance (%)*	*Proposal (%)*	*Total issue claims*
Newspaper	1996	8.3	78.8	13	424
	2000	15.4	68.2	16.4	434
	2004	20	61.4	18.6	1029
	2008	22.2	42.2	35.6	1358
	All	**18.8**	**56.5**	**24.7**	**3245**
TV	1996	45	44	11	80
	2000	17	72.4	10.4	134
	2004	11.8	85.6	2.7	187
	2008	35.8	27.2	37	400
	All	**28**	**50**	**22**	**801**

I now turn to the major question of interest: are negative claims more performance based than positive claims? For the newspaper ads the answer is yes. Over all four campaigns 45.9% of 1703 positive issue claims targeted performance, compared with 68.3% of 1542 negative issue claims. Candidates made their own policy proposals (a third of positive issue claims) much more often than attacking their opponent's proposals (13.9%). If Geer is right, this should reflect the fact that proposals are forward looking and thus less amenable to be supported with evidence. But it is also consistent with strategic models that advise candidates to avoid engaging their opponent's proposals (e.g. Simon 2002). That candidates seldom engage their opponents' policy proposals, but often question their policy performance, reinforces the point that negative claims are relatively heavy on retrospective information (see discussion in chapter 4). Negative claims may represent an informational resource for voters, but the scope of this information is predominantly retrospective. This interpretation is exemplified by the newspaper ads in the 2004 campaign, where 79.1% of negative claims targeted performance, but less than one per cent mentioned opponents' policy proposals.

Strategic and contextual conditions again have an impact on the focus of candidates' issue claims. For instance, in 2004 the incumbent Chen Shui-bian made very few policy proposals (1.4% of positive claims in newspaper ads), in a campaign dominated, on his side, by ideological appeals. For his part, Chen adopted a common strategy for an incumbent with agenda setting power—essentially ignoring his opponents' proposals and sticking to his own 'Taiwan identity' message. Chen's dual strategy (pursuing his own ideological message and ignoring his opponents) was so successful that in the latter stages of the campaign Lien and Soong abandoned their earlier economic proposals for personal attacks on Chen's character and mobilized to boycott the 'defensive referendum' (Mattlin 2004a: 17). Lien and Soong, long-time KMT officials with limited 'Taiwan identity' credentials, even tried to muscle in on Chen's Taiwan identity theme.[109]

Table 7.5 shows the proportion of general statements, performance claims and policy proposals as a percentage of total positive or negative issue claims.

Table 7.5: Breakdown of issue claims by tone (*Newspaper*)

Year	*Tone*	*General (%)*	*Performance (%)*	*Proposal (%)*	*Total issue claims*
1996	+	7.1	77.9	15	353
	-	14.1	83.1	2.8	71
2000	+	4.6	80.8	14.6	151
	-	21.2	61.5	17.3	283
2004	+	19.9	48.2	31.9	589
	-	20.2	79.1	0.7	440
2008	+	30.5	16.6	53	610
	-	15.5	63.1	21.4	748
All	**+**	**19.7**	**45.9**	**34.4**	**1703**
	-	**17.8**	**68.3**	**13.9**	**1542**

[109] In addition to their advertising on this theme, Lien and Soong provided one of the campaign's most dramatic and memorable images. On the stump at separate locations, both candidates (with their wives) prostrated themselves and kissed the ground to symbolize their love for Taiwan.

The breakdown of issue claims in the TV ads (Table 7.6 below) shows similarities and differences with the newspaper ads, although the lower number of issue claims in the TV ads necessitates a degree of caution in interpreting them. Overall, negative claims (57.1% of 387 total negative claims) are proportionally more performance based than positive claims (43.4%). The TV ads contain a higher proportion of vague general statements than newspaper ads, consistent with accounts of televised advertising 'lacking beef' (Rawnsley 2000b) and the allegedly greater image-construction function assigned to the TV medium (Wen et al. 2004). However, this should not be overstated; a combined two thirds of positive claims and more than three quarters of negative claims promote policy performance or make proposals.

The comparison of different campaigns again reveals substantial differences. Chen's re-election campaign in 2004 stands out, with neither candidate putting forward a policy proposal in their TV ads. Instead, both parties focused predominantly their on their own policy performance (75.3%). Negative claims were also dominated by performance claims (92.7%), mostly attacks by Lien and Soong on incumbent President Chen. By contrast, candidates in 2008 did not promote their own policy performance (26%) or attack their opponent's (28.6%). This was despite both candidates having recent experience of holding other public offices, and in Ma's case, Hsieh's vulnerable association with Chen's performance to attack. Instead, TV ads in 2008 were both vaguer than the average and contained a relatively high proportion of policy proposals. 42.3% of positive claims (and a third of negative claims) were proposals, as both candidates sought a new direction after Chen's two terms.

Table 7.6: Breakdown of issue claims by tone (*TV*)

Year	*Tone*	*General (%)*	*Performance (%)*	*Proposal (%)*	*Total issue claims (n)*
1996	+	48	41.3	10.7	75
	-	0	80	20	5
2000	+	27.8	68.5	3.7	54
	-	10	75	15	80
2004	+	24.7	75.3	0	77
	-	2.7	92.7	4.5	110
2008	+	31.7	26	42.3	208
	-	40.1	28.6	31.3	192
All	**+**	**32.9**	**43.4**	**23.7**	**414**
	-	**22.7**	**57.1**	**20.2**	**387**

By candidate status

The findings presented in chapter 6 on levels of negativity, show that candidate status has an effect on the tone of campaign advertising. The proportion of negative claims for challengers was much higher (see Table 6.2) than for incumbents. More negative still were the 'quasi-incumbents' competing in effectively open races. In Hsieh's case (a quasi incumbent in 2008), almost half of all claims were negative. This stands in stark contrast to Hsieh's previous campaigns for Mayor of Kaohsiung (1998, 2002) and Mayor of Taipei (2006), which were almost entirely positive (Sullivan 2008). A candidate's position as an incumbent, challenger or quasi incumbent, is also expected to influence the focus of their issue claims. Incumbents have an incentive to promote the continuation of the status quo, while challengers have to make a case for change and to indicate the direction of that change. It is expected therefore that a higher proportion of incumbents' claims should promote their own policy performance and a greater proportion of challengers' claims should attack the incumbent's performance while also setting out their own policy proposals. The breakdown of issue claims for incumbents (Lee in 1996 and Chen in 2004),

challengers (Peng in 1996, Chen in 2000, Lien in 2004 and Ma in 2008) and quasi incumbents (Lien in 2000 and Hsieh in 2008) is shown in Table 7.7 below.

Positive issue claims in incumbents' ads are dominated by policy performance (greater than 90% for both media types). That incumbents focus heavily on promoting their own policy performance is true even of Chen Shui-bian in 2004, despite the many problems he encountered in his first term.[110] It is also common for incumbents to target their challengers' records in other offices, sometimes referencing policy performance from many years before. It is not surprising that incumbents do this—if their major promotional message on the issues is how good a job they have done, it makes sense to compare their own record with that of their challengers. Incumbents make very few policy proposals in their newspaper or TV ads. It would be erroneous to infer that they did not make policy proposals—but they did not use their paid advertising to do so. Presumably this is because of their easy access to the media and other platforms from which to pitch their proposals.

Challengers' ads show the expected predominance of negative performance claims—84.6% of negative issue claims in newspaper ads. Challengers' also make a high proportion of proposals—half of their positive issue claims in newspaper ads. A relatively low proportion of challengers' negative issue claims engaged the incumbent's policy proposals.[111] Having argued that it is necessary for challengers to make a case for change and to state what they would do differently, to a certain extent they must also show they are qualified to carry out the task. To this end,

[110] For accounts of the difficulties faced by the first Chen administration, see for example, Chu (2005), Copper (2003), Rigger (2002) or Wu (2002). One of Chen's major campaign messages (one that had apparently worked for the DPP during the Legislative campaign in 2001) was that global financial trends and the obstructionist behaviour of the opposition (with their majority in the Legislature) were to blame for Taiwan's economic and other misfortunes.

[111] This cannot solely be explained by noting the small number of proposals that incumbents made in their ads—incumbents may make many proposals outside of their paid advertising.

challengers do promote their own prior policy performance—around a third of positive issue claims in their TV ads. Of course, challengers in Taiwanese presidential elections generally have many years of public service to reference.[112]

The strategic calculus for quasi incumbents, i.e. candidates from the ruling party but not incumbent Presidents seeking re-election, is more complex. They have their party's record to defend, but they may also want to avoid too close association with an unpopular outgoing president—as was the case with Hsieh Chang-ting (and John McCain in the US) in 2008.[113] Quasi incumbents have more need to promote their own issue positions and programs and to engage challengers' case for change, because unlike sitting presidents, quasi incumbents do not enjoy the same agenda-setting privileges. The findings for quasi incumbents appear to reflect these dilemmas. Both positive and negative claims in the newspaper ads are more evenly distributed across the three categories than for challengers or true incumbents. In their TV ads, quasi incumbents show a greater propensity to claim credit for the policy performance of the outgoing administration. This is more understandable in Lien's case in 2000, having been Vice President in the popular Lee Teng-hui's administration. Hsieh in 2008 was not in such an advantageous position. Indeed Hsieh suffered from KMT attacks on both Chen's performance (as outgoing President from the same party) and his own previous performance as Mayor of Kaohsiung (a position he held from 1998 to 2005).

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[112] Chen Shui-bian in 2000 could draw on his experience as the popular Mayor of Taipei between 1994 and 1998. Lien Chan and Soong Chu-yu (who ran separately in 2000 and on a joint ticket in 2004) had served as Vice President and Taiwan Provincial Governor respectively, amongst other positions. And Ma Ying-jeou in 2008 was a career official within the KMT regime, serving as Minister of Justice in addition to (elected) Mayor of Taipei between 1998 and 2006. The exception amongst challengers was Peng Ming-min in 1996, who had never held public office. This is reflected in a relatively low proportion of his positive issue claims on performance.

[113] However they cannot condemn their outgoing colleague too harshly, for fear of creating low expectations about their own party and fostering their own 'guilt by association.'

Table 7.7: Breakdown of issue claims by status

Candidate status	*Media*	*Tone*	*General (%)*	*Performance (%)*	*Proposal (%)*	*Total issue claims*
Incumbent	Newspaper	+	4.4	94.3	1.4	436
		-	29.4	70.6	0	17
	TV	+	0	95.8	4.2	24
		-	45.1	54	0.9	113
Challenger	Newspaper	+	26.9	19.2	53.9	1031
		-	14.4	84.6	1	1024
	TV	+	25.3	37.3	37.3	233
		-	13.5	79.8	6.7	193
Quasi incumbent	Newspaper	+	24.6	34.9	40.5	501
		-	36.5	25.9	37.6	170
	TV	+	16.5	73.3	10.2	236
		-	38.2	47.1	14.7	68

7.5 Summary

In this chapter I have presented data that allow us to address three major hypotheses about the tone and content of campaign advertising in Taiwan. Overall, the results presented in this chapter are generally as expected. First, negative claims are more likely than positive claims to be supported with evidence—by a factor of ten in the case of newspaper ads, although the majority of negative claims (some 90%) are not supported with evidence. There is thus some support for Geer's (2006) argument, but if 'the need for credibility' is driving candidates to search for evidence, it does so in a way that is more variable than currently conceived. A strategic reading of differences in the provision of evidence across elections suggests that candidates are selective in the claims they choose to back up with evidence and this is not solely determined by the decision to 'go positive' or 'go negative.' The implications of this finding for Geer's theory are explored in the concluding chapter.

Second, a greater proportion of negative claims do focus on the issues. When candidates promote themselves, it is predominantly in terms of ideological themes followed by the issues. Criticism of opponents is led by attacks on the issues. Attacks are proportionally more personal than self-promotional claims. Again, there are substantial fluctuations across campaigns, suggesting that candidates emphasize certain themes according to a range of strategic, contextual and agent-based variables.

Third, negative claims provide abundant information on policy performance—although both positive and negative performance claims in Taiwan focus heavily on policy performance. The distribution of issue claims appears to be influenced by a candidate's status in an election and is consistent with general theories of candidate behaviour—e.g. challengers' incentives to demonstrate the need for change.

The data presented in this chapter lend empirical support to the 'defence of negativity.' However, the connection between information indicators and tone appears to be more complex than currently conceived. The implications of this finding are taken up in the concluding chapter.

8. Implications for Taiwan's democracy

In this chapter I discuss some of the implications of the thesis for Taiwan's democracy. Some of the results of my content analyses are very distinct from prior research on campaign advertising in Taiwan and I provide some thoughts on why this might be the case. I then discuss some of my findings in the context of wider debates on the health of democracy, the state of election campaigning and aspects of party competition in Taiwan. These sections include brief discussion of avenues for further research.

8.1 Comparing my findings with prior work

As I have noted in the introduction and at several further points in the thesis, existing research takes an almost exclusively negative view of campaigning in Taiwan. Taiwan specialists have criticized campaign ads for their supposed lack of substance and excessive negativity. My content analysis findings challenge such depictions and paint a healthier picture of campaign advertising than the fraught commentaries contained in single election studies. Certainly there are examples of incivility and questionable charges among the 542 TV and newspaper ads I analyzed, but the type of claim noted in the introduction—e.g. the unfounded accusations about Chen's womanizing—is in a small minority. Candidates are not drowning in the mud slung by their opponents and the proportion of negative claims for both media types is around one third of all claims, i.e. a similar level to US presidential campaigns. Since US campaigns are intensely competitive and regularly feature negative exchanges, this finding may be cold comfort for those concerned about negativity in Taiwan.[114] The main point however, is that campaign advertising in Taiwan does not appear to

[114] Coverage of the 2008 US Presidential contest in Taiwanese media, frequently made mention of the ferocity of the fight--and remarked on similarities with local contests.

be *exceptionally* negative. Moreover, campaign ads contain far more issue content and far less personality content than existing single election studies would lead us to believe. Indeed, candidates are focusing more on the issues—and less on personality, ideology and strategy—with each passing campaign. As Fell has previously noted, 'Taiwanese elections have involved intense debates over policy matters' (2005a: 143). This is evident in the substantial proportion of advertising claims I found on the issues—an average of around 40% in both media types—higher in recent campaigns. One area where previous research appears to be accurate is the level of ideological content. Around one third of all claims in both media types are ideological, although this too is declining.

There are several potential explanations for the differences between my findings and those in much previous research. In my view, the most likely possibility is that previous studies suffer from selection bias, based on the decision (conscious or otherwise) to focus on a small number of 'prominent' ads. There are undeniably some ads across four presidential campaigns in Taiwan that are highly uncivil and could easily give the impression of being 'excessively negative.' Analysis of these ads alone would necessarily result in different conclusions to mine. Selection bias, either due to the research design or as a result of the 'sub-conscious ordering' of the nastiest ads affects interpretations of negativity.[115] Many negative ads in Taiwan, as revealed in chapter 7, are issue-focused and 'substantive' and it is important that data collection efforts and associated empirical analyses include all available ads (subject to applicable selection criteria).

[115] For discussion of this point, see Geer 2006: 38-9; for (problematic) examples of using 'prominence' as a selection criteria, see Jamieson 1992 and West 2001.

I have argued that systematic studies of a larger number of ads over time have the potential to offer a different and arguably more balanced perspective of campaign advertising in Taiwan. However, I should also acknowledge that the research design employed in this thesis is not definitive. Indeed there are a number of variables omitted from the content analysis which may bias my own findings. For example, as I discussed in chapter 5, I used content analysis to generate empirical data. This decision follows the majority of research on campaign advertising and was an appropriate method for analyzing a large number of ads. Moreover, since the major objective of the thesis was to assess predictions from Geer's study (which used content analysis), it was essential to use a comparative data generation technique. However this methodological decision meant that only manifest verbal and textual content was recorded. Images, symbols, colours, cues and 'underlying meanings' were excluded. It is possible that these omitted variables are responsible for the differences between my findings and prior research. A further possibility concerns the appropriate level of analysis. In this thesis both the unit of coding and the unit of analysis was the individual claims that make up each ad. However aggregating claims up to the ad level can produce different results—for instance the effect of 'manifesto-type' ads on raising overall mean estimates of issue focus. From the perspective of theory testing neither of these issues is problematic—because they mirror the conditions of the theory under examination. However, it is important that I acknowledge these issues, especially as they may be extremely important when we consider potential effects at the voter level. This is the central concern underlying much research on campaigning and link closely to debates in Taiwan on the connection to the health and quality of democratic competition.

8.2 The health of democracy in Taiwan

Elections and election campaigns are but two elements that make up democratic political systems. Analysis of election campaigning is thus limited in what it can reveal directly about the health of a democracy. As I will discuss in the next section, my interpretation of the data in this thesis is quite positive—the state of campaigns in Taiwan appears 'healthy,' at least judged by the content of parties' advertising. Furthermore, I argued in chapters 2 and 3 that campaign ads that contribute to the information environment available to voters can help promote democratic outcomes—by enabling reasoned choices and promoting accountability. There is one other area in which campaigns may exercise a comparatively important influence on the health of democracy—the 'unintended effects' discussed in chapter 2. As the thesis focuses solely on the 'supply side' and does not explore exposure effects at the voter level my empirical data do not speak directly to this issue. However, it is possible to speculate on the issue of voter effects and the potential implications this might have for Taiwan's democracy.

As a reflector and amplifier of political competition, much, if not most, research on election campaigning is ultimately motivated by an interest in voter effects. I showed in chapter 2 that the malaise thesis (i.e. the alleged connection between exposure to negative advertising and lower turnout) has been marginalized in the US. Moreover, low turnout is not something that Taiwan has suffered from, at least not at the presidential level where turnout in four elections averages 80%. However, campaign exposure effects can also have broader implications for citizen engagement and attitudes toward the democratic process.[116] This is highly germane to ongoing debates in Taiwan about the perceived legitimacy and support for

[116] Including internal efficacy, knowledge, engagement, public trust etc.

democracy at the mass level. The most prominent among these in the literature, is public support for democracy. Paolino and Meernik, for instance, go as far as to claim that 'the key to democratic consolidation in Taiwan is the extent to which Taiwanese support democracy' (2008: 183). Moreover, survey work demonstrates that this is a real concern in Taiwan. Chu et al. (2001) for instance, talk of 'backsliding on a massive scale' in support of democracy as the most desirable political system. More recently, Chang and Chu discovered the paradox of a public that is 'more satisfied with the performance of democracy than they are committed to it as the best form of government' (Chang and Chu 2008: 110). If we accept that mass support for democracy is a precondition for democratic consolidation (Linz and Stepan 1996), the attitudes uncovered in the Taiwan Election and Democratization Survey, Asian Barometer and World Values Survey, are worrying indeed. And while other mass level indicators such as political interest, knowledge and participation have been cause for optimism in Taiwan (Rawnsley 2003a), attitudes towards democracy and public trust have declined dramatically throughout this decade (Chu et al 2001; Chang et al 2004; Paolino and Meernik 2008). As yet, we do not know whether there is any connection between trends in campaigning and in attitudinal change at the voter level. Although I have argued for a sanguine interpretation of campaigning in Taiwan, it is true that claims do sometimes 'cross the line.' Thus when one considers that Taiwanese were told in 2004 that their incumbent president was a terrorist and a dictator, we should not rule out the possible reduction of respect and trust in public officials and the democratic process. Moreover, we should be open to the possibility that, in Taiwan's case, any such effects may be magnified by the recency of Taiwan's experience of democracy and the disconnect that exists

between citizens' cultural expectations and the strategic considerations of candidates. I was rather dismissive of (Confucian) cultural arguments (chapter 4) in terms of their ability to explain elite behaviour, but the fact remains that we still do not really know the influence of culture at the mass level in Taiwan. On the other hand, apart from campaigning, there are many areas of Taiwan's democracy that are likely to provoke citizen dissatisfaction—e.g. high-level corruption, inefficient institutions and polarization on national identity issues (Chu 2005; Copper 2003). Dissatisfaction may also reflect more parochial concerns—Stockton (2005), for instance, finds a strong correlation between public attitudes to democracy and support for incumbents.

Much of this discussion is necessarily speculative—my data do not speak directly to these concerns. However it highlights the glaring need for research on campaign effects and voter level attitudes in Taiwan. To date there have been very few studies on the effects of exposure to campaign advertising in Taiwan—in fact Chang's (2003) study on the effects of partisanship on ad processing is the lone example published in English. This lack of research notwithstanding, numerous Taiwan specialists *have* inferred a connection between negative campaigning and public support for democracy, social cohesion etc. (see the earlier discussion of this point in chapter 4), although these suppositions remain to be tested empirically. Essentially it is unknown what the effects of campaign exposure are in Taiwan. For instance, I have shown that negative claims contain certain content that, from a normative perspective, may help voters make reasoned choices—but whether they really benefit from this information is unknown. If negative ads are a comparatively rich source of particular types of information (e.g. policy performance), then, *ceteris paribus*, voters who are exposed to them should be comparatively well informed

about these topics. On the other hand, negative ads may contain useful information, but there is sometimes a cost to pay—negative ads sometimes 'cross the line.' This raises a question about potential effects that are 'orthogonal to information' (Valentino 2006). Are the potential cognitive gains associated to exposure to information negated by other, affective or psychological, effects of being exposed to messages that occasionally 'cross the line'? In the US there is empirical evidence of voters' 'resilience' in the face of negativity (Brooks 2006) and incivility (Brooks and Geer 2007), but we do not know if the same holds for Taiwanese citizens. Exploring these potential effects would add an empirical, in addition to a normative, reason to emphasize the information component of campaign advertising in Taiwan (which I have shown appears quite healthy), rather than the psychological or emotional.

8.3 The state of campaigning in Taiwan

In distinct contrast to much prior research, my analysis of campaign advertising leads to a relatively sanguine judgement about the state of campaigning in Taiwan. There are several other issues not covered directly in my analysis that support this view. For instance, the 'stand by your ad' amendments to the CEC legislation (Presidential and Vice Presidential Election and Recall Law: Article 48) appear to have made parties more accountable for their campaign advertising—both in terms of the content and in reigning in the problem of unofficial ads paid for by (often anonymous) support groups.[117] Over all four campaigns, I calculated that unofficial ads made up around 20% of official ads—but this proportion has fallen by more than half in the latter two campaigns. Since support groups cannot easily be held responsible for the messages they disseminate, and anonymous ads have largely been

[117] Law available in English at http://www.cec.gov.tw/English/laws.html

responsible for the more egregious of negative claims, this is a promising development. On the other hand campaign spending restrictions (Article 38/9), at least in terms of air time and column space for advertising, appear to be routinely ignored or laxly enforced.

The thesis has focused exclusively on election campaign advertising. Campaign advertising is an important campaign tool for candidates and potential resource for voters, because it represents one of the few methods of direct communication, free from the filter of the media. Analysis of campaign advertising is justified for this reason. However, I should acknowledge that advertising is just one element of the broader information environment available during the campaign. Indeed, the information environment during presidential campaigns is extremely crowded, with intense media coverage and other platforms that candidates can utilize (debates, stump speeches, rally appearances, talk shows, websites, blogs etc.). One recent study (Buell and Sigelman 2008) aims to measure the extent of broader campaign negativity during US presidential campaigns since 1960. This ambitious study covers candidate advertising, mailings, speeches, debates, press releases, press conferences and interviews by the candidates, their running mates and their surrogates. Distinguishing between methods of attack and electoral context (drawing heavily on Skaperdas and Grofman's (1995) model of campaign strategy), this research design offers a useful template for assessing how campaign advertising in Taiwan fits in to the broader campaign environment. This would also provide a within-case comparative perspective on the level of negativity in campaign advertising—i.e. how negative does campaign advertising appear when we compare it to other forms of campaign communications?

Campaign communications in Taiwan are abundant and diverse. The level of information available to voters and the number of campaign events in which voters particpate are both very high. Taiwanese attend campaign rallies and other events in huge numbers, attesting to the vibrancy of the campaign environment and the level of engagement of Taiwanese citizens. These two observations suggest a healthy state of campaigning in Taiwan, although much work remains to be done to assess and analyze both elite and mass campaign behaviour. For instance, analysis of broader party communications (and their surrogates) has been neglected. Work on the role of the media, campaign coverage and the issue and potential effects of media bias, is sparse, especially that published in English. Analysis of lower level elections requires work—for instance, is campaign advertising at lower levels of office as rich in information as at the presidential level? In short, Taiwanese parties, candidates and the media are increasingly focused on campaign activities—a commensurate level of scholarly attention to these activities is required.

8.4 Party competition in Taiwan

The central focus of the thesis has been on party campaign advertising. However analysis of these data also allow some comment on the nature of party competition in Taiwan—at least in terms of the salience of various issues and ideological themes as reported in chapter 6. In terms of relative emphasis, parties in Taiwan have converged, post-2000, on a similar set of issues and ideological dimensions. The theoretical literature, particularly spatial politics models, suggests that convergence should make campaigns more negative but at the same time richer in 'dialogue'—since parties are forced to engage each other on the same issues. However, issue salience does not tell us much about issue positions or preferences, at least not

without further manipulation of the data.[118] Thus my data allow me to say something about convergence/divergence, but nothing directly about polarization. Although this is not the focus of the thesis, I should acknowledge this omission since research focusing on polarization paints a less sanguine picture of party competition in Taiwan. The problem appears to have been particularly pernicious during the Chen Shui-bian era, following a period in the late 1990s when party preferences appeared to converge on the moderate centre. By 2005 however, Chu observed the 'extremely nasty, endless and paralyzing battles between the DPP government and its foes' and the 'deep divisions and worrisome trends [that] threaten Taiwan's fragile democracy' (2005: 43/4). Writing around the same time, Liu observed that 'political parties are in such extreme opposition on so many issues that the political system has degenerated into chaos and disorder' (2004: 214).

Some of this conflict is a result of institutional weaknesses in Taiwan's semi-presidential system. However the KMT and DPP have diverged on several issues, particularly national identity, through the course of Chen's two terms. Chen Shui-bian's aggressive Taiwanization programme and the hardening of his rhetoric on Taiwan's status, particularly towards the end of his second term, were accompanied by KMT moves to a more 'pro-China' position post-2004. One result of the increasingly polarized party competition has been a rise in street demonstrations and, as evinced in commercial survey responses, dissatisfaction and frustration at the mass level.[119] One of Taiwan's foremost political scientists and democratization specialists, Yun-han Chu, explicitly links the tenor of party competition with mass support for democracy (2005). In such a scenario, it may seem superfluous to talk of

[118] For an outstanding example in the European context, see Franchino 2007.
[119] See for instance http://www.tvbs.com.tw/news/poll_center/default.asp

the informational benefits of negative advertising—although it is remarkable, from the theoretical perspective, that I discovered negative advertising to be so information rich in spite of party polarization.

9. Conclusions and further research

Concluding *In Defense of Negativity*, Geer provides the following summation:

> Negativity provides a chance for those competing for power to make a case for why they should be given power and it gives those in power the chance to show the risks associated with the other side. This struggle may not be pretty and at times the rhetoric will cross the line of civility and even be insulting to our collective intelligence. We need, however, to make room for it in our politics and, moreover, we need to appreciate its contributions to the political process. (2006: 162).

In this view, the contribution of negativity to the *democratic* political process lies in the information it provides to voters. To make reasoned choices, voters require both positive and negative information. They need to know what candidates propose to do once in office and the qualities and credentials they will bring to the job. There is also a legitimate need for them to know about problems with proposed programs—if there are doubts about candidates' qualities and credentials, voters should have access to this information. It may strike us as unseemly when candidates question a rival's integrity or competence, particularly if they do so in more direct terms than would be appropriate in regular social interactions, but these issues are relevant and important when a position of national leadership is at stake. There is no private job interview for presidential candidates in democracies. Instead, probing questions about a candidate's credentials are made in the open, on national TV and in the pages of national newspapers.

In addition to this informational 'division of labour' (positive claims promote and propose, negative claims question and challenge), further criteria are required to judge the contribution of negativity to the democratic political process. Vague and unsubstantiated claims, regardless of tone, do not do much to improve the information environment. A preponderance of image based claims does not inform voters about the issues of substantive importance. Identifying criteria for judging

'good quality' information is a difficult task (see the discussion in chapter 3), but I have argued that specificity, evidence and degree of issue focus (particularly policy performance) are reasonable standards. This is necessarily a partial choice, but a strong argument can be made to the effect that specific, issue claims backed up with evidence represent a better informational resource for voters than vague and unsubstantiated personality claims.

Based on his research on presidential campaign in the US, Geer (2006) argues that negative claims make a contribution to democracy precisely because they consistently contain higher quality information than positive claims. Namely, negative claims are more specific, issue focused and more frequently supported with evidence than positive claims. According to Geer's theoretical explanation, these systematic and general differences in content are due to the 'need for credibility.' The credibility requirement, Geer argues, is greater in the case of negative claims and induces candidates to work harder on the content of their criticism of rival candidates. In the US, the behaviour of candidates in twelve presidential campaigns, as evidenced by the content of their advertising, fits Geer's predictions—their negative claims are more specific, more issue focused and provide abundant information on policy performance. This is an important finding about a phenomenon (negative advertising) that has been the cause of many concerns, if not despair, about electoral competition in the US. Just as Ansolabehere and Iyengar's *Going Negative* (containing a very different message) resonated in the mid 1990s, *In Defense of Negativity* has obviously struck a chord with political scientists and popular commentators alike.[120]

[120] I have previously noted the level of academic citations for *In Defense of Negativity*. The book has also received a high level of media attention. A Lexis-Nexis search of the author and title returns well

Geer's predictions are consistent with findings in the case of US presidential campaign ads, but what about other contexts? Are negative claims a source of information in other democracies? Or is the phenomenon a special feature of US campaigns? The logic underlying Geer's theoretical explanation is apparently a general condition, i.e. the need for credibility. There is no reason to believe that candidates in any democratic context are immune to the requirement, or the desire, to make their claims credible. If the goal behind campaign advertising is to persuade voters to support the sponsor of the ad (or to displace support from an opponent), the minimum requirement for this to be possible is that the claims made in an ad are at least believable, are credible. There is reason to believe therefore, that the relationship that Geer describes between information and negativity is a general condition that should be visible in other democracies. One of the primary objectives of this study has been to assess whether or not there is evidence for this argument.

At the outset—recall the depictions of campaigning noted in the introductory chapter—it appeared that Taiwan would constitute a strong test for Geer's theory. Taiwan *is* a democracy and, since democratization and liberalization of the media, a campaign environment with several features similar to the US has emerged. But in many ways the US and Taiwan are 'most different' cases. Furthermore, prior accounts of campaign advertising in Taiwan suggest anything but the kind of 'contribution' imagined by Geer. Mudslinging, hearsay and incivility best describe existing characterizations of negative advertising in Taiwan—far from the substance rich informational resource that Geer describes in the US. Indeed, based on prior work on campaign advertising in Taiwan, it would not have been a surprise to

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over one thousand news articles. From major and minor publications in the US to outlets from Mexico to the Czech Republic, the message in this book has generated a lot of attention.

discover high and increasing levels of negativity, a pre-occupation with image and personality and a systematic lack of substance. However, these expectations were not supported by my empirical findings, as summarized in the previous chapter.

Indeed, I found that negative claims were more frequently supported with evidence, focused more on the issues and more on policy performance *than positive claims*. The findings are consistent with Geer's (2006) theoretical claims. First, the proportion of negative claims supported with evidence is around ten times that of positive claims. This result holds for both media types—in spite of differences in the parameters of the data collection for TV and newspaper ads. There are differences in levels of evidence across campaigns, claim category (issues are generally more likely to be supported with evidence) and, if my strategic reading is correct, the supply of evidence appears to be contingent on various contextual and strategic factors. It is also important to acknowledge that some 90% of negative claims are not supported with evidence. We should not infer from this that these claims are therefore false or unsubstantiated, but the majority of negative claims do not benefit from the advantages ascribed to those that are supported with evidence.

It is necessary to ask why candidates are obviously selective in the claims that they do provide evidence for. One possibility is that candidates use a small number of evidenced claims as 'camouflage' for other, unsupported claims. This would give the veneer of making substantiated criticisms and perhaps allow less substantiated or more controversial claims to 'fly under the radar.' This potentially problematic issue requires further analysis, particularly insights that could be derived from interviewing candidates and their consultants. A further possibility is that providing evidence is related to fluctuations in the 'need for credibility.' Contingent

on a variety of contextual and agent-based factors, the ease of difficulty in achieving credibility for a claim may vary, prompting candidates to seek and provide evidence, or not. This latter possibility is explored in more detail below, where I address future research.

Second, the proportion of negative claims on the issues is higher than for positive claims—e.g. in newspaper ads, 57% of negative claims compared to 36% of positive claims. These differences appear smaller than Geer reports for TV ads in the US (72% of negative claims on the issues compared with 49% of positive claims), but this reflects the absence of strategic appeals in Geer's coding which I have record in mine. Calibrating the results to account for these differences in coding produces similar results. Again there are large differences in the degree of issue focus across campaigns and parties. While these fluctuations do not challenge Geer's hypothesis, they heed us once again to acknowledge the influence of campaign context. It may be the case that in the aggregate, negative claims are more issue focused than positive claims, but the extent to which this is the case can vary quite substantially. This too is discussed in the future research section below.

Third, as expected, negative issue claims focus heavily on policy performance. Geer's argument that candidates do this because of the easy availability of evidence is further supported by the observation that the majority of issue claims supported with evidence were performance claims. The proscribed division of labour between promotion and criticism is to some extent visible in Taiwan—e.g. a higher proportion of positive issue claims are policy proposals and negative claims are dominated by performance. However, Taiwanese presidential candidates' promotional claims also contain a substantial proportion, indeed a majority, of

claims about *their own performance*. Issue information in Taiwan is therefore predominantly retrospective. Again though, context matters. In particular the focus of issue claims varies considerably according to a candidate's status. For instance, challengers' positive claims are dominated by policy proposals, while the majority of their negative claims target policy performance.

The empirical findings presented in this study prompt several avenues for future research. In the final section of this concluding chapter I discuss some of the implications of the thesis for future research on negativity and information in campaign advertising.

9.1 Future research on negativity and information

As previously noted in this chapter, the empirical findings for Taiwan are generally supportive of Geer's predictions. However, as I observed in presenting these results in chapter 7, there is substantial variation that Geer's account cannot explain. For instance, why are some negative claims specific, issue-focused and supported with evidence, but many others are not?[121] Under what conditions does the connection between negativity and information hold? Although I do not address these questions empirically—that task is left to future research—in this final section I develop a potential explanation based on insights derived from the study on Taiwan and existing theoretical work.

Credibility and campaign dynamics

Geer argues that the 'need for credibility' largely determines the content of negative claims. However, strategic readings of the results presented in chapter 7, in addition

[121] Indeed the same can be said (and asked) of positive claims.

to other literature discussed below, suggest that campaign context and candidates' strategic responses to this context influence the content of their advertising. Geer's theory does not account for these conditions and cannot explain the variations in content observed in Taiwan. Alternative approaches take campaign dynamics into account, but also have weaknesses. Political marketing specialists consider the minutiae of the campaign context in addressing why particular ads contain certain content. These analyses are often plausible,[122] but such is the detail necessitated by the approach that analyses are often restricted to one or a handful of ads. Moreover analysts generally seek explanations in factors or combinations of factors that are 'unique' and therefore unfalsifiable. At the other end of the spectrum, formal (rational choice) campaign models based on general and simplifying assumptions about candidate behaviour offer general explanations for the tone of advertising, but leave the question of specific content unanswered. I draw on elements from both approaches to try to connect explanations of tone and content. My account is based on general propositions and is not restricted to Taiwan. I will argue that the tone and content of party and candidate ads are the result of strategic decisions made during the campaign. Furthermore, I link the two by a using modified version of Geer's concept of the 'need for credibility.'

The notion that candidates seek credibility for their messages is plausible and useful. However, as currently conceived, this notion is static and does not allow for variations over the course of a campaign. Yet, as we can all witness for ourselves via coverage in the news media, election campaigns are anything but static events. Rather, campaigns are 'dynamic struggles between candidates to define the

[122] In Taiwan, this statement is exemplified by the work of Cheng Tzu-long and Niu Zexun. Unfortunately the work of these two specialists (and other working in the same field in Taiwan) suffers from limited visibility due to publishing solely in Chinese.

informational context for voters' (Carsey et al. 2006: 3). Candidates, parties and teams of campaign consultants are highly sensitive to the changing dynamics of the campaign and vary the tone, content and target audience of their advertising accordingly (Damore 2005). This perspective does not lead to rejection of credibility-seeking as a factor in a candidate's decision-making calculus, but it does suggest that the extent to which, and the forms in which, candidates attempt to enhance the credibility of their messages may be different at various moments of the campaign. A first corrective step is to recognize that the ease or difficulty with which candidates can achieve credibility for their messages varies as a function of strategic, agent-based and contextual conditions. I will argue that the same variables that influence a candidate's decision to self-promote or attack an opponent are linked to the choice of topic, target audience and ultimately, the quality of the informational content of a campaign advertisement. Re-conceptualizing the 'need for credibility' as dynamic and contingent potentially allows us to deal with variations in the quality of information—such as those observed in the findings for Taiwan reported in chapter 7.

A strategic approach to explaining tone and content

Numerous empirical studies demonstrate that viable, major party candidates and their consultants behave strategically (e.g. Jamieson and Waldman 2001; Norris et al. 1998; Sigelman and Buell 2003). Strategically here, means that candidates behave in such a way that they believe will maximize support and enhance their prospects of winning an election.[123] These empirical accounts share the view that candidates are highly motivated actors who have perceptions about their comparative advantages

[123] This is not the case with independent 'spoilers' like Ross Perot or Ralph Nader, who have no realistic chance of winning and have different objectives in standing for election (Buell and Sigelman 2008; van der Eijk and Franklin 2009).

and disadvantages. They are also responsive to changes in the state of the race and voters' reactions to their own and their opponent's messages *as the campaign unfolds*. As Sigelman and Buell put it, 'formal models and conventional wisdom alike converge on the idea that the strategy and tactics of major party opponents in presidential campaigns should vary as a function of the competitive situation in which the candidates find themselves' (2003: 518). In terms of campaign advertising, Abrajano and Morton conclude in their empirical study of US Congressional campaigns that '[ad] content is a *strategic choice* by candidates and should be considered so in future models of campaign advertising' (2004: 31, my italics).

It is useful at this point to acknowledge the distinction between strategy and tactics. Although candidates may have an overall strategy at the outset of a campaign, short-term tactics may evolve in response to what happens once the campaign is under way (Sigelman and Buell 2003). As the campaign unfolds, parties and candidates are faced with a raft of tactical decisions (Damore 2002: 670). In terms of their campaign ads, candidates must decide what mix to use of self-promotion or attack, whether to launch a pre-emptive strike and whether to respond to, ignore or inoculate against an opponent's attack. They have to decide which segment of the electorate to target with their message—their own core supporters, independent voters or an opponent's support base. They must decide on the focus of their ads (e.g. issues, ideology or traits) and choose the specific issues or traits that they want to emphasize. Finally they must decide on the form and content of their ads, e.g. should they make cognitive claims or affective appeals and what level of information, emotional intensity or level of civility should these ads contain? Prior research suggests that none of these decisions are made arbitrarily. True, candidates may err

in their campaign tactics, for example, ignoring an opponent's attack or failing to modify an ineffective message. However, there is no reason to believe that erroneous decisions are made with wilful disregard for the information available to them or of the overall tactics and strategies embarked upon. I now take a closer look at some of the major decisions that candidates have to make in terms of their advertising and how this affects the credibility of their message. First, the decision to target an opponent or to self promote.

The decision to attack (or to self promote).

The starting point for many formal models of campaign strategy is the choice to self promote or to attack (see Sigelman and Shiraev 2002 for discussion; Skaperdas and Grofman 1995). Why do candidates talk about their own merits and policies or target those of their opponents? In general terms there are several potential benefits to a negative advertising strategy. These include undermining an opponent's support, making one's own message more memorable (especially important in a highly diverse media environment where voters are no longer a captive audience) and gaining leverage over the campaign and media agendas (Damore 2002). On the other hand positive advertisements that illuminate a candidate's position on the issues have clear benefits in familiarizing voters with issues and concerns salient to that candidate. Positive and negative strategies also have disadvantages. For instance, running too many positive ads can allow opponents a free ride to establish their own campaign agenda. On the other hand, running too many negative ads may provoke a backlash. It is clear however, that the costs and benefits of going negative are dynamic and contextually dependent. This is why we do not see a uniform level of

negativity for all candidates across elections, or even for individual candidates across the duration of a single campaign.

Rational choice based formal models of candidate strategy provide a useful approach to analyzing a candidate's strategic calculus.[124] Candidates are assumed to be motivated to win elections and in order to achieve this they have to gain the support of a sufficient number of voters. They are also assumed to be endowed with sufficient information about levels of support for themselves and their opponents to allow them to select the strategies they think best to gain support. In the context of presidential elections in the US and Taiwan these assumptions appear to be quite reasonable. From the perspective of analyzing candidate strategy it matters less whether or not campaign strategies or campaign ads are *actually persuasive* than that candidates believe that they are.[125] Why else would candidates seeking election—in democracies the world over—spend so much of their campaign budgets on advertising (Graber 2000)? Candidates design their advertisements *as if* they have the power to generate support for themselves or to undermine the support for their opponents, and they choose the tone and content of any message deliberately so as to maximize the likelihood of it succeeding in this task. In Cobb and Kuklinski's words, '[politicians'] goal is to persuade the public that their position is the right one. They choose arguments strategically on the basis of assumptions about what will and will not work' (1997: 92).

[124] An example of their utility is they are based on *general* assumptions about candidate behaviour. Although such assumptions have been criticized (notably Green and Shapiro 1994), in the case of Presidential candidates, they appear more 'realistic' than in other scenarios.

[125] As noted in chapter 2, opinion in political science is divided on the extent to which candidates can change voters' minds during the campaign (see Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002 for a review of the literature).

There are two basic differences between the various formal models of campaign behaviour. One type (e.g. Davis and Ferrantino 1996; Riker 1996) assumes attacks to be underlyingly rational and predicts that negative advertising will be the norm. This expected outcome is at odds with the observation that levels of negativity vary greatly from campaign to campaign. The other type is more plausible in that it assumes that rational attack strategies are contingent on the state of the race and candidates' standings in terms of voter support (Skaperdas and Grofman 1995), or on candidate positions in ideological space (Doron and On 1983) or on candidates' personal advantages (Harrington and Hess 1996).

Skaperdas and Grofman (1995) assume that at the beginning of a campaign each candidate has a level of support that is known to both candidates. Candidates then decide on how to apportion their resources to positive or negative advertising. They argue that candidates try to attract remaining undecided voters with positive ads and use negative ads to move opponent's supporters into the undecided pool (*Ibid*: 50). When two candidates run equally positive campaigns they split the undecided pool of voters. Trailing candidates cannot win in this way so they must attack in order to convince supporters of the opponent to move to the undecided pool (*Ibid*: 50). The prediction that leading candidates go positive (fearing a 'boomerang effect' as a result of unnecessary attacks) and trailing candidates go negative is supported by much empirical evidence (Theilmann and Wilhite 1998: 1052).

Doron and On (1983) make similar assumptions about the reason for an attack, but their model also takes into consideration competing candidates' positions in ideological space. They argue that positive campaigning strengthens the loyalty of a candidate's supporters and that the objective of attacking is to attract uncommitted

voters by framing an opponent as a threat. In multiparty competition in particular, attacks are carefully targeted to forestall potential deserters and to attract those voters who are close enough in the issue space that they might possibly change their support (*Ibid*: 218). Harrington and Hess (1996) let candidates differ in ideology, but also add personal attributes to their model. Positive campaigning is used in their spatial model to move the candidate towards the swing voter position and to push an opponent away from that position. The major difference between their model and the previous two, is that candidates with a higher 'valence index score,' i.e. a better set of personal attributes, are more likely to run positive campaigns. They challenge the causal connection between standing in the polls and negativity, arguing that 'both [are] driven by a candidate's weakness in terms of personal attributes' (Harrington and Hess 1996: 221).

Of these three models, the Skaperdas and Grofman (1996) model has had the most empirical success (Buell and Sigelman 2008; Damore 2005; Sigelman and Shiraev 2002; Theilmann and Wilhite 1998) and provides a useful starting point for connecting tone and content. Depending on their standing in the polls, candidates are more likely to promote themselves (if leading) or to attack their opponents (when trailing). In tight races candidates are predicted to try to attract support by promoting themselves and attacking opponents. However, the decision to attack is often more complex than simply looking at a candidate's standing in the polls. The Skaperdas and Grofman model does not take into account, for instance, previous (or predicted) attacks by an opponent. This can affect initial strategies by inducing candidates to launch a counter-attack (Newman 1999), inoculate against a predicted attack or to launch a pre-emptive strike (An and Pfau 2004). In addition to standing in the polls

therefore, an opponent's behaviour also needs to be taken into account (Lau and Pomper 2001). Unless a candidate enjoys a considerable lead, in which case he or she may choose to ignore an attack, an attack may prompt a defence or a counter-attack (Carsey et al. 2006). Similarly, a candidate's own prior use of attack ads at an earlier point in the campaign may affect the decision to launch a subsequent attack—e.g. in Skaperdas and Grofman's (1995) account, candidates are wary of attacking too much for fear of prompting a 'boomerang effect.'

The link between attacking and credibility

Although a candidate's fundamental need to attract support does not change, the identity of the voters a candidate needs to target, and the urgency of attracting additional support, varies according to the state of the race and other factors—for example, proximity to Election Day and the number of undecided voters. Depending on these variables, candidates choose whether or not to go negative. Skaperdas and Grofman's model predicts that when a candidate attacks, the target audience for that ad is primarily made up of undecided voters and the opponent's supporters. The reason is that an attack is predicted to occur when the sponsor is behind in the polls and realizes that simply splitting the undecided pool (by continuing to go positive) is insufficient to gain enough votes to win.[126]

At this point I introduce one further element. I argue that candidates or parties enjoy an existing level of credibility with voters, which can change during the

[126] Although members of the non-targeted audience (i.e. existing supporters) may also see the ad, the message (i.e. an attack on a rival) is likely to be confirmatory and the expected outcome is either stronger support or, at worst, no change. In some circumstances however, candidates have to take into account the potential effects of an ad on non-targeted audiences. This is particularly so in the case of 'reaching out' to opposition supporters with positive ads, which, if they go too far, can alienate existing partisans.

campaign. I assume that a candidate's credibility is highest within his own core supporters and lowest amongst those of his opponents' supporters. This assumption is consistent with the literature on the effects of partisan predispositions on voter evaluations of candidates (van der Eijk et al. 2006; Zaller 1992). It is reasonable to infer that the level of credibility required for a voter to accept the cognitive content of a candidate's message varies in accordance with their partisan identities. *Ceteris paribus*, 'the base,' i.e. a candidate's core supporters, do not require the same level of convincing (to accept the 'correctness' of a message) as a supporter of the opposition would.

Where a candidate's existing credibility with an audience is low, I predict that the quality of information in ads that target that audience should be higher. This is based on the assumption (which Geer also makes) that the credibility of a message can be increased by making it more specific and supporting it with evidence. Conversely where existing credibility is high, the quality of information should be lower. Research that compares advertising in battleground and safe states in US presidential campaigns and across close and landslide Senate races, finds that close races—where candidates are to some extent forced to address less friendly audiences—result in both higher levels of negativity *and* better quality information. Sulkin and Swigger, for instance, observe that candidates 'respond to increased competition by running more substantive campaigns and taking clearer stances on the issues' (2008: 233).

The reason that candidates may seek to increase the level of information in ads that target less friendly audiences, is that they must overcome 'psychological resistance' if they are not simply to be ignored or tuned out. When candidates target

a 'friendlier' audience, with whom they enjoy a high existing level of credibility, any claims they makes are likely to be 'reassuring' and accepted without much trouble (Zaller 1992). As Stevens and colleagues put it, 'partisans usually regard criticisms of an opponent by a candidate they support as expected and confirmatory—and they are unlikely to scrutinize such claims closely' (2008: 529). By contrast an ad that targets an audience with an unfriendly predisposition is more than likely to contain messages that challenge existing beliefs. The findings in the political communication and political psychology literatures are unequivocal that predispositions (especially partisanship, but also racial and gender attitudes) have a substantial effect on information processing (Campbell et al. 1960; Franz and Ridout 2007; Westen et al. 2006; Zaller 1992; see Iyengar and Simon (2000) for a review). Voters have numerous psychological processes in place to help them avoid, deny, rationalize, distort, tune out or forget adverse information about their preferred candidate, or positive information about an less preferred one (e.g. see Westen et al. 2006 for a review of work on cognitive dissonance in the context of political communication). It is only when criticism raises anxiety levels *because it is considered legitimate*, that partisans start to question existing beliefs, if only temporarily (*Ibid*: 529). It follows therefore, that when candidates target these unfriendly audiences, they must make their cognitive claims more credible if they are not simply to be tuned out or dismissed.[127]

It is important to emphasize that the credibility-effects I describe are not restricted to negative messages. Contrary to Geer (2006), I argue that there is no

[127] Questioning of existing beliefs can also be triggered by heightened emotional reactions, which would suggest that candidates could use strong affective messages. My account is primarily directed at cognitive claims, although emotional appeals, as I acknowledge below, also have a potentially important role that needs to be recognized.

reason to assume a priori that positive claims are inherently more credible than negative ones. For instance, consider an ad that attacks the integrity of an opponent who is embroiled in a corruption scandal (see Iyengar (1991) on the effects of priming). Why would this ad be less credible a priori than a positive claim that a candidate with a long record of promoting a particular policy would suddenly pursue a quite different policy if elected? (Petrocik 2004). From my point of view it is more plausible, and more useful, to conceive credibility as being dependent on the candidate's relationship with the target audience in combination with the candidate's existing credibility on the topic of the ad. Which leads to one final input that I have yet to address—namely, the agency that candidates enjoy in choosing the topic on which to attack or promote themselves on.

Choice of ad topic

While the state of the race and the identity of the target audience may have a substantial effect on the existing level of credibility, candidates can also increase their credibility with their choice of the topic of the ad. The major way in which candidates can achieve this is to choose issues on which their party has a favourable record (on issue ownership see Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik et al. 1996; Robertson 1976; on the 'dominance principle' see Riker 1996). Issue ownership theory, where parties stick to the issues they have a good reputation on or 'own,' has empirical support in many different contexts, including Taiwan (Fell 2005). The rationale is simple: 'campaign messages are more effective if they emphasize issues on which the candidates have built a record that appears favourable to voters' (Sellers 1998: 159). Abbe et al. (2003) find support for this argument, except where

contextual conditions lend an alternative opportunity to set the agenda, e.g. an opponent involved in a scandal, the state of the economy or involvement in wars.

That candidates focus on issues (or traits etc.) that are most favourable to them is intuitive and supported empirically (Sellers 1998). Nevertheless, candidates may sometimes be forced to address less favourable topics. For instance empirical studies suggest that the closer a race is and the closer the proximity to Election Day, the greater a candidate's propensity to leave their 'comfort zone' (Damore 2005; Sigelman and Buell 2004). This latter finding is consistent with the intuition that the closer to Election Day the smaller the number of undecided voters is. Candidates in tight races are forced to fight on the same territory for the relatively small number of voters who remain undecided near Election Day. Candidates may also be forced off their preferred territory in order to respond to an attack (Pfau and Kenski 1990)—fearing that failing to do so may do may increase the traction that the attack gains (see John Kerry's failure to respond to the Swift Boat ads in 2004). In other cases, 'performance issues' (such as the state of the economy) may be more salient than a candidate's preferred 'owned issues' (Petrocik 2000). Favourable campaign issues that a candidate would like to emphasize may fail to gain traction or prove unpopular with poll-respondents and focus groups. In some circumstances then, a candidate may be forced on to unfamiliar or unpromising territory. When this occurs, a candidate's claims may be less credible and should therefore contain a higher level of information to compensate. This outcome is expected regardless of tone, but especially in terms of negative claims.[128]

[128] However, in some cases (notably when candidates are trailing heavily close to Election Day) substantive ads appealing to reason may be insufficient to 'shake things up.' Candidates may then resort to 'fear and loathing' ads full of emotional appeals (Abrajano and Morton 2004).

The road ahead

The explanatory account set out in this section naturally requires more work—a model requires specification from which testable hypotheses can be derived. After testing predictive accuracy empirically, in Taiwan, the US or any other democracy, we will be better placed to assess whether it represents an improvement on Geer (2006). The connection between negativity and information on which the recent 'defense of negativity' is built, is an important research topic. I know of no theoretical or empirical work that suggests that use of negative advertising is likely to recede in the US or any other democracy where it is currently a feature. Furthermore, as candidates in newer democracies start to embrace and develop their own negative campaign strategies, negative advertising should continue to grow as a 'global phenomenon' (Sigelman and Shiraev 2002). This thesis demonstrates that there is a connection between negativity and information and that negative advertising makes a contribution to the information environment. However, exploring the nature of this connection more closely requires work.

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